Chronicles

September 1996 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

Battles of the Books

Multiculturalism and Education

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Whom Do Liberal Catholics Serve?

Back in 1969 Daniel Callahan said some candid and revealing things about his career as a liberal Catholic writer (in *Spectrum of Catholic Attitudes*, R. Campbell, ed.): "I am writing this at a very nice desk, in a very nice house, and most of the money for these amenities has come from the unsought but profitable business of being known as a left-wing OK Catholic, one who can be counted on to knock the same things in the Church that most enlightened secular minds have always knocked." Callahan then recalled his conversation with "the editor of a major secular magazine" who wanted someone to write an article on a particular controversy in the Church. Callahan recommended a person who would defend the position of the Church. The editor retorted, "Oh no, we want a Catholic like *you*." And so, Callahan wrote it. But Callahan suspected he was "being had." He admitted that "OK Catholics" like him were providing a "theological blessing" for "secular liberalism." Being a genuinely honest man, Callahan eventually left the Church.

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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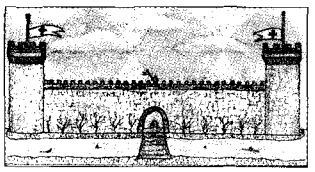

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Paganism

As an Orthodox monk, I imagine Alain de Benoist ("Monotheism vs. Polytheism," April 1996) performing his daily orisons before an icon by Gauguin, chanting selections from Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* as his Psalter, and reading passages from Rousseau as the appointed lessons. He does remind us that pagans include the great philosophers of ancient Greece, etc., but the underlying message seems to be, "*Mais*, how *merveilleux* it was when we all lived in the jungle paradise before those horrible *monothéistes intolerants* ruined the noble savage's innocent joy!"

M. de Benoist can only reach his conclusion that monotheism is by nature intolerant, while polytheism is not, if he reduces, as do most modern writers, *religion* merely to questions of cult and belief in a supernatural Being or beings. Polytheists are indeed often quite tolerant in questions of cult, as in India and Japan. But if one operates on a plenary definition of religion as one's total way of life based on an individual's or a group's highest values, then we find that all religions (i.e., cultures and ways of life that are actually lived) are quite intolerant of that which in their worldview is not tolerable. Such intolerance includes, of course, that of French secularists, whose highest values seem to be language, food, and sex (in that order), and who correspondingly are not noted for their generous tolerance of mispronounced French, poorly prepared repasts, or unattractive women (or in the case of female French *secularistes*, men)!

—*Br. Isaac Melton*
St. Michael's Skete
Cañones, NM

On State-Sponsored Prayer

Rabbi Jacob Neusner is correct when he writes in "Letter From Inner Israel: State-Sponsored Prayer" (April 1996): "Constitutional issues aside, there are strong theological arguments against legislating prayer for young people." "We speak each in our own, unique way; we honor the piety and prayer of others; but we do not participate and *cannot* participate in these prayers, unless we apostatize."

Ever since *Christian News* began in 1962, some of our well-meaning Fundamentalist friends have taken issue with us for not supporting the various efforts which come up from time to time to get prayer and Bible-reading into government schools. In 1981, Senator Jesse Helms, a leading advocate of "voluntary" prayers in public schools, was asked during a Senate debate if the "Hail Mary" would be an acceptable prayer for children to recite in a government school. He said that even as a Baptist he would not have any objection if such a prayer were used in government schools and that he would feel the same way if he were a Jew.

The Christian maintains that Christianity is the only true and saving faith and that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father except by me." All Christians confess the Athanasian Creed, one of the great ecumenical creeds of Christendom. It begins: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic (i.e., universal, Christian) faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity."

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is one major conservative church body which has taken issue with Fundamentalists who champion prayer and Bible reading in government schools. Already in 1925, Dr. Walter Maier, Old Testament professor of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, a Harvard Ph.D., and founder of the International Lutheran Hour, wrote: "The widespread effort to introduce the Bible into public schools, as well meant as it may be, is un-American because it is against American principles to force a Jewish child to read the New Testament and because it is contrary to our constitution to confuse the duties of the church with the privileges of the state. The whole arrangement which throws the church into politics makes Jesus more of a policeman than a Savior, and seeks to have His church wield the policeman's club, besides preaching His Gospel. It constitutes a

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real menace to our national life; for, if successfully carried through, the policy will bring a reversion to the spirit and custom of the days of the Puritans."

When I attended public schools in the Bronx, New York, almost all of my classmates were Jews. Any prayers would have been led by a Jewish teacher and a service at graduation time by a rabbi. Christian children in government schools should not be urged to pray with non-Christians, and non-Christian children should not be urged to pray with Christians in such a school. Christians who are determined to have their children pray in school, can send them to a parochial school if at all possible. Actually, any child can silently pray anytime he wants to in any school.

—Herman Otten
Editor, Christian News
New Haven, MO

On Christianity and the State

Philip Jenkins' tactful and balanced review ("Unbaptized America, May 1996) of Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore's *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* gives credit to the authors' attention to detail but fails to take note of their tendentious tendency to mislead their readers about the "Christian foundations" of our American republic. They are right, of course, in pointing to the fact that the Constitution does not embody religious values and in asserting that the values reflected in the Declaration of Independence, while consistent with Christianity, do not say more than Deists or Freemasons would.

The idea that the Constitution was written at the high point of secularism and of the conceit that man had "come of age" and could dispense with religious tutelage makes sense. The authors think that if the Constitution had been drafted several decades later, it would have been more explicitly Christian; this is an interesting and probably valid suggestion.

What is overlooked, however, is the fact that the U.S. Constitution not only does not contain Christian values, but it does not contain values at all. As the late Harriet Pilpel pointed out in her pro-abortion arguments, the document does not contain a right to life. It basically establishes a methodology permitting the citizens to order society and the state according to the principles they cherish, but it does not contain principles. But it is important to note that although the Constitution did not embody religious values, the American people did. As long as the consensus was largely Christian, the Constitution served as a methodology for the people to order society in a way consistent with Christianity. Once the consensus, or at least the policy- and opinion-making elite, is no longer Christian-oriented, the Constitution permits the Christian values to be discarded and to be replaced with whatever the majority of the moment wants.

It ought to be acknowledged that the United States have never been formally or structurally Christian, but it also ought to be recognized that our people, our ethical principles, and our way of life were once far more Christian than they are today. There really is something missing in our national life, something that once was there.

—Harold O.J. Brown
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, IL

Messrs. Kramnick and Moore in their book *Unbaptized America* (or perhaps it was the reviewer Philip Jenkins) need to address many issues if they want to reconcile completely the argument regarding church and state. First, nowhere in the Constitution do the words "separation of church and state" appear. There is a vast difference between the First Amendment prohibition of the establishment of religion and the "separation of church and state." When one considers that Congress on several occasions in the early years of our nation appropriated money to support Catholic and Protestant missions on Indian reservations, and the money was accepted and used by several Presidents, including Jefferson, one recognizes the dimensions of the difference. (Note: This is the same Jefferson who originated the phrase "separation of church and state" and also the same Jefferson who vetoed appropriations to build roads through Kentucky on the grounds of constitutionality.)

Second, the First Amendment was meant to apply to the federal government only. (The Tenth Amendment now largely ignored was very important to the Founders.) Under no circumstances would these early signers of the Constitution have condoned federal courts telling states and local governments how to react (one way or the other) to religion.

Third, the authors themselves recognized that the Founders of our nation did not intend a hostility to God. They did not, however, address the belief of many Americans today that our government is hostile to God. It is hard to argue otherwise.

In short, the Constitution is in no way Godless (as the authors claim), nor was it intended to be. The Constitution was intended to prohibit the federal government from establishing a church sponsored by the government and supported by taxes as was the case in most European countries. That is all the Constitution says. That is all it meant. Historical scholarship does not refute (but supports) the above statement.

—Paul Gottfried
Elizabethtown College
Elizabethtown, PA

On Paleoconservatism

I have followed the Samuel Francis saga ("The Rise and Fall of a Paleoconservative at the *Washington Times*," Part I & II, April and May 1996) with keen personal interest. I am an enthusiastic reader of *Chronicles* and other traditionalist writing. As a young paleoconservative who has worked on political campaigns and recently jumped to journalism, I have become accustomed to establishmentarians warning me about my ways. Most often, neoconservative high priests advise that I am simply too young and idealistic to understand how things really work. I should shun radical ideas if I want to avoid trouble and get anywhere in this town, I am told. Unfortunately, uncensored history, cultural tradition, religious dedication, and wholesome public policy tenants are considered subversive rather than necessary. In this system, realism is derided as racism, the majority are blatantly subjected to the minority, and decency is construed as vulgarity. All in all, I suppose I am idealistic because I understand that while paleoconservative beliefs beget persecution, tyranny begets rebellion.

—Brett M. Decker
Washington, D.C.

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ROBERT HUSSEIN, a Kuwaiti citizen, may be wishing for another Iraqi occupation. After converting to Christianity, Hussein was put on trial for apostasy in an Islamic court, which quickly found him guilty. Although Kuwait's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it imposes no penalty on a Muslim who kills a man found guilty of apostasy. While Hussein still has the ostensible right to practice his religion openly, he fears for his life and has gone into hiding in Kuwait. It is not in the interests of the New World Order to investigate cases like this too closely, for Hussein's case and many others suggest that in liberated Kuwait some creeds are more equal than others.

Hussein has found a champion in the Rutherford Institute, which has publicized his story and asked both Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Amir Shaikh Jabar Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to do something to save him. "I fear for my life and the lives of more than 1,000 other Christians in Kuwait," Hussein told the Rutherford Institute, an international legal organization that seeks to protect religious freedom. Hussein finds little comfort in promises from Kuwait's embassy in America that his life is safe, since Kuwait's constitution declares open season on apostates.

It may be small comfort to Hussein and other Christians in Kuwait, but the new Kuwaiti regime has been just as zealous in persecuting other religious minorities as in punishing Christians. According to a Human Rights Watch report published earlier this year, the Kuwaiti government has repeatedly used Iraqi threats and provocations (i.e., brief incursions by Iraqi troops across the border) as an excuse to mistreat minorities seen as holding "pro-Iraq" sentiments. The large Palestinian and Bedoon (stateless Arab) populations in Kuwait are still seen as having been supportive of the Iraqi occupiers, despite the large numbers of men and women in both communities who fought in the resistance. As a result, their freedoms are severely constricted. Particularly hard hit are the Bedoons, who have been shut out of their traditional occupations in the police and military, barred from sending their children to state-run schools, and confined to a few dismal slums.

At other times, the Bedoons' punishment takes a more palpable form. In 1995 the police rounded up hundreds of "undesirable" Bedoons and placed them without charge in the Talha Deportation Prison. The Bedoons then had the choice of leaving Kuwait or remaining in the overcrowded jail, which was originally built as a schoolhouse. In protest, the Talha inmates went on a hunger strike, which finally resulted in some efforts to improve their conditions. A majority of the Bedoons in Kuwait have lived there for their entire lives, but harassment and intimidation have driven roughly half of their community of 300,000 from the country.

Kuwait's Palestinian community has also shrunk from about 400,000 to 33,000, thanks to official policies which include employment discrimination, a fine imposed on Palestinians for every day they remain in the country, as well as more direct methods of intimidation. Middle East Watch (in *A Victory Turned Sour: Human Rights in Kuwait Since Liberation*) has tried to bring attention to cases such as that of Kalil Bahour, a Palestinian who directed the Umm al-Haiman Secondary School in Kuwait. Arrested by the police without warning or explanation, Bahour disappeared from sight. His wife later heard from the police that he was ill and had been taken to al-Addan Hospital. Upon reaching the hospital, Bahour's relatives found that he had died ten days before from what must have been a very bizarre illness—he showed signs of having been tortured with a sharp weapon, and his nose and ears were cut off. Yet his death certificate said that he had succumbed to a heart attack and kidney failure.

Don't expect the White House to denounce Kuwait's mistreatment of its religious minorities. In Kuwait, it is not Afrikaaners oppressing blacks but Muslims persecuting Christians and others who have failed to achieve official status as victims.

—*Michael Washburn*

JOHN C. SALVI III has been convicted of killing employees at two abortion clinics and sentenced to two consecutive life terms by Judge Barbara Dortch-Okara. The judge refused to let Salvi read a statement about his religious beliefs—or delusions, as his attorney pleaded—and the jury rejected the insanity plea. Yet it really ought to be conceded that if Mr. Salvi believes that the child in the womb is a human being, whose life ought to be protected, if necessary even by violent assaults on those who would "terminate" it, then our society ought to agree that he is indeed mentally unbalanced. As long as our society, with the President at its head, agrees that the unborn child is not human, at least not until it is more than three-quarters out of the womb, must it not regard those who believe otherwise as delusional?

The judge was evidently hostile to the defendant, which is understandable in a representative of a judicial system which has staked its entire honor and integrity on the fiction that the unborn child is not a human being. The prosecutor, John Kivlan, asking for the maximum sentence, stated, "We feel that the premeditation and cruelty in this case was extraordinary." Indeed, but did Dr. Haskell not premeditate the "procedure" he pioneered and advocated? And is it not cruel to kill a not-quite-born human being by sucking out its brain, a procedure that would be criminal cruelty if performed on an animal? A society that rests easily with abortion on demand will find it increasingly difficult to engage in credible moral discourse on other forms of violence and killing, whether it be "physician assisted" at the bedside or performed with a pistol at close range.

The reading of the verdict and sentencing was accompanied by many emotional scenes. Mrs. Ruth Ann Nichols, the mother of one of the murdered women, had said to Mr. Salvi on the witness stand, "I hope you have sheer misery the rest of your life." Her anguish is certainly understandable, as is that of Mrs. Ann Marie Salvi, John Salvi's mother. Mr. Salvi's crime has brought death to two people, misery to many, and a harsh judgment on himself. Biblically speaking, Mr. Salvi may be said to have deserved a death sentence, but then the same might well be said of those who commit infanticide. As the *New Republic* editorialized in July 1976, late abortion is hardly to be distinguished from infanticide, "nevertheless, we are for it," as the social cost of requiring women to

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bear unwanted children is too great to bear.

When we hear of violent crimes in the inner city, it is commonly said that society is responsible. Without agreeing that society *is* responsible, and certainly without denying the responsibility of the perpetrators of crimes, we might note that the same logic applies in this case: that if a callous society is responsible for crimes in the ghetto, then a society that protects and rewards those who kill a child emerging from a womb must share responsibility for the crimes of anguished abortion protesters such as Mr. Salvi. If the whole society is in any sense guilty of the one, it is surely not altogether innocent of the other.

—*Harold O.J. Brown*

BORIS YELTSIN'S recent electoral triumph over his Communist rival was hailed throughout the West as a victory for democracy and reassuring evidence that Russia will continue on the path of progress and peace. In Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, the leaders of the United Nations of the Free World breathed a sigh of relief. Absent from the congratulations were the by now traditional warnings against the upsurge in Russian nationalism represented by such sinister figures as Gennady Zyuganov, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, and General Alexandr Lebed. Of course, now that Lebed has joined Yeltsin's team, even the nationalist bear has been stuffed back into his cage. Or has he?

American news commentators, in the second stage of the Russian presidential campaign, began to grow uneasy with Lebed's denunciations of foreign cults (including Mormonism) but grudgingly decided to set down these gaffes to campaign rhetoric. But if xenophobia wins votes in Russia, then serious or not, Lebed may be preparing some surprises for the Free World. When I met Lebed back in January (along with the directors of the Lord Byron Foundation), he gave no indication of either xenophobia or political cynicism. In fact, despite his obvious sense of humor, Alexandr Lebed is a deadly serious man who believes that the United States and Germany, along with their puppet regimes in Britain and France, are busily encircling the remnant of the Russian empire they have already succeeded in dismembering. The object is to reduce Russia from a second-rate power to an inconsequential piece of geography that can be exploited at will by German and American businessmen and their governments.

Lebed's suspicions, shared by a great many serious-minded Russians, are the signs not of paranoia but of political realism. In the Balkans and in the Middle East, the United States has already used its military muscle to crush Russian allies and diminish Russian influence. On the western flank, the Germans are once again making noises about the Sudetenland, and German business interests are taking over the former European provinces of the Russian empire. A child could see what we are up to, and General Lebed is no child: he may turn out to be, along with Chancellor Kohl, the most hardheaded statesman of this decade, and the sick and aging Boris Yeltsin is no match for him, either in will or intellect.

Viewed in the abstract, Yeltsin's decision to make Lebed his deputy looks like political suicide. Here is an alcoholic heart patient, almost universally despised by his own people, with only two cards to play—his incumbency and the fear of communism—and he gives sweeping power over the military and the police to a vigorous tee-totaller, who is loved by the soldiers and grudgingly respected by people who object to his political views. But Yeltsin is no political novice, and he did not survive either in the old system or in the new by misjudging the character of his rivals. He knows the risks far better than we do, and if he is willing to take them, he has a good reason. Some time before the elections, he announced that he had already picked his successor. Amidst the usual speculation, Alexandr Lebed declared that Yeltsin could only have meant him. At the time it seemed like a joke, but no longer.

If Lebed is Yeltsin's handpicked successor, then he need have no fear that the general will murder his boss on the way to the top. It also means that Yeltsin has finally made up his mind to do what I have been predicting he would do since the day he came to power: play to the right, turn away from the West, and reassert Russian military and political influence. Boris Yeltsin's political victory may well turn out to be a turning-point, but not in the sense in which it is being greeted in the provinces of the American empire. It may just signify that the long Russian retreat has begun to slow to a halt and that we may see the reemergence of a Russia that can look after its own interest without the kindly assistance of the United States. It may also spell the end of the American power monopoly in Europe.

In the long run, a multipolar Europe, in which Germany, Russia, and the United States are competing for influence, will prove to be a far healthier situation, not just for Russia or Europe as a whole, but for the United States, which has neither the national will nor the competent leadership required for the management of global empire. Unlike Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, Alexandr Lebed is no friend (that is, client) of the United States. As a Russian patriot, he has his own people's interest at heart, and even if a resurgent Russia should go back to rattling sabres and threatening our satrapies, his rise to power, if we can learn to mind our own business, should represent no threat to the United States.

—*Thomas Fleming*

OBITER DICTA: Frederick Turner, whom Paul Lake in these pages has called "a poet and thinker of remarkable intelligence and originality," has contributed three new poems to this issue. Founders Professor of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas, Turner has works of fiction and many articles and poems to his credit.

* * *

The Second Annual Conference of the Southern League took place June 7-9 in Montgomery, Alabama, the historical birthplace of secession. Among the many distinguished speakers at the meeting were Southern League President Michael Hill, board members Clyde Wilson and Thomas Fleming, John Remington Graham (a lawyer associated with the Parti Quebeçois), and Charley Reese, a nationally syndicated columnist. The 300-strong audience was largely composed of scholars, activists, and professionals, groups which—as the *Village Voice* observed in its June 11 story on the Southern League—have come to define the vanguard of Southern nationalism. The organization, in less than two years, has swelled from 24 to 3,000 dues-paying members.

* * *

Details about this year's John Randolph Club meeting can be found in the ad inside the back cover.

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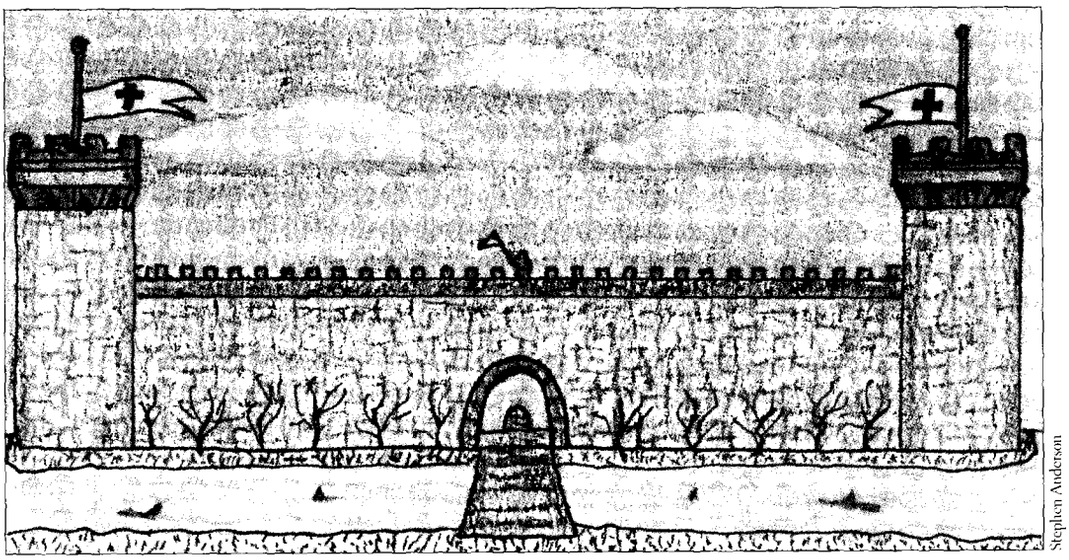

Stephen Anderson

Battles of the Books

by Thomas Fleming

I have several times passed through Figline Valdarno without realizing it was the birthplace of Marsilio Ficino, the head of the Platonic Academy of Florence. Ficino was a strange bird: part Platonist, part humanist, and part Christian, he has sometimes been suspected of paganism or worse. Perhaps he was a pagan, somewhere in his mind, but I rather think the fault lies with us: after over 500 years of progress, it is easy to believe that any civilized man, particularly one who takes part in a cultural revolution, must be an emissary of Antichrist.

Ficino was, of course, a priest (not that this proves much), and he sincerely believed in what was later called the *philosophia perennis*, the idealist philosophy taught by wise men in all ages. He was not, however, a liberal universalist, but a defender of the very specific traditions of Greek philosophy, Hebrew scriptures, and Christian revelation, all of which were under attack from the ruthless infidels who, after finishing off the Roman Empire in the East, were mercilessly persecuting their Christian slaves in the Balkans. In 1480 Ficino wrote to the humanist king of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, urging him on in his wars against the Turks. After praising his beloved Plato and other Greek philosophers and writers, Ficino remarks:

> In former times all these people sought nothing other than the true glory and light with highest zeal. At length, after many generations of light they have fallen down into darkness under the ferocious Turks. Alas, what pain! Stars, I say, have fallen into darkness under savage beasts. Alas, the celestial lights of liberal teaching and arts have for a long time lain in limbo, or rather, in a place more darkly covered than limbo.

This is a somewhat different perspective on the so-called "Dark Ages," which Ficino attributes not to the obscurantism of medieval Aristotelians (whose work he studied) but to the savage domination of the Turks. Martin Luther, I regret to say, did not see the Muslim conquests in the same light. Initially disapproving of the campaigns against the Turks, he finally conceded—in 1529, when the Ottomans were beating at the gates of Vienna—that they should be driven back from Germany like any other infidel invader. Turks or Catholics—it was all the same to him. Something had gone very seriously wrong in the world, when Christians refused to defend Christendom for any but pragmatic motives.

The internecine squabbles of Christians—the Western Church against the Orthodox, Protestants against Catholics—seem to blind their moral vision and obscure their conscience. Today, Catholics will believe the Orthodox Russians and Serbs capable of any evil, just as many Protestants refuse to acknowledge Catholics as any kind of Christian. In the meantime, "the ferocious Turks" are reconquering Europe for the crescent, and in American universities a polyglot rabble of alien creeds is dividing up the spoils of the old humanities curriculum put together by humanists like Ficino, Erasmus, and their godfather Petrarch.

Ours is not the first age to have experienced a struggle for curriculum. On the contrary. There has never been a time in

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the past 150 years when the progressives have not been chipping away and undermining what had been a coherent classical curriculum. Even before World War II, the wreckers and hooligans (men like President Eliot of Harvard) had won the battle, and the so-called conservatives of the 50's and 60's were ferociously defending a ruined and devastated city. The aqueducts had been cut, the temples burned, all learning left off and despised, and yet the conservatives continued to march out to do battle against the barbarians. If they had stopped to look at their own barbarian faces in the mirror, they might have stayed home or sold out to the fifth columnist neoconservatives who scarcely pretend to civilization. In the current debate over multiculturalism, neither side takes Ficino's position: that the traditions which made the West should be defended from its enemies. In fact, the defenders of the "traditional curriculum" are like the Bosnian Serbs who, 500 years ago, turned themselves into Turks.

In the Romantic era, the struggle was of the Greeks against the Romans, who were stigmatized as derivative and unimaginative, a libel that is still believed by some Hellenists as well as those who have no right to an opinion (Greekless English professors). The Greco-Roman conflict was a mere lovers' quarrel; the two really great struggles which mark the frontiers of modern culture were, first, the humanist revolution of the 14th and 15th centuries and, second, the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns that did so much to drive up the cost of paper in 17th- and 18th-century France and England.

Seen through the lens of the French Encyclopedists, the Humanists were the advance guard of a revolution against Christian superstition, but in the eyes of Voltaire's English contemporary, the very Christian Samuel Johnson, Renascence humanists were reformers of language, archaeological scholars unearthing the precious treasures of antiquity. Johnson was an assiduous reader of humanistic scholarship—his references to them only less frequent than to the classics. The late Professor Kristeller was of the same opinion and more than once dismissed humanistic paganism as a fiction. Even the Platonism of Petrarch and Ficino could hardly be seen as revolutionary, particularly since it had the warrant of Augustine.

Conservative as it was, the Renascence—and the Reformations (Catholic as well as Protestant) it gave rise to—was a revolution in the sense that the humanists wished to restore "the long glories of majestic Rome." Petrarch worked unceasingly to bring the Popes back from Avignon and—and an even more futile, if not dangerous wish—to install the Emperor in Rome. The wildest dream was of rebuilding the ancient city and restoring its grandeur. Their project was not without its perils. Classical Latinity was restored to the point of breaking continuity with the recent past so that even as a schoolboy, Erasmus wrote a Latin unintelligible to his teachers.

Those who would reform Latin and restore Rome must maintain a certain critical distance from their own age. Any break with the immediate past may turn into a breach in the walls through which all the demons of doubt and impiety, the love of novelty and the spirit of mockery will come trooping. The habit of viewing your own age—including yourself, your friends, and your nation—with objectivity may, in the end, deaden you to those primitive loyalties and attachments which make, not just civilization, but human life itself possible. A man who can be objective about his mother is a monster, and he is a traitor to his country who does not, on some level, prefer it to all others. The critical scholarship invented by the humanists separated them first from the medieval past, second from the medieval church, and ultimately from the ancients themselves, once the critical scrutiny was applied to the Greek and Roman masters. Petrarch, upon discovering Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, was shocked to discover that in his political career the philosopher was just another vain and ambitious politician.

There is danger in every kind of revolution or restoration, but one must not look for bad motives where there are none. It is all too true that men like Erasmus and Montaigne and perhaps even Lorenzo Valla—those sly and ironizing critics of Christian superstition—may have been as interested in subverting as restoring Christianity. Beside Montaigne, Luther is positively medieval in his fidelity to the institutions of the church. But what may be true of Erasmus is certainly not true of Petrarch, a genuinely good and pious man.

Petrarch, who could easily have had a successful career in the law, made the decision to become a priest, while his brother, whom he loved as brothers are supposed to but very rarely love, became a Carthusian monk—a step that Francesco envied rather than condemned. Despite the weakness of the flesh that led him to father several children, Petrarch strove for chastity, which he finally achieved some time in his 40's. Despising the venality and corruption of the cardinals (especially the French cardinals) in "Babylon" (Avignon), he read his daily office and grew yearly in faith, ultimately preferring the Christian to the pagan classics. Petrarch, in more ways than one, defines Renascence humanism, and neither he nor his friends and disciples displayed the symptoms of apostasy. It was only in the Age of Reason that leading intellectuals began their open rebellion against the Faith, and it is during the same period that the superiority of the ancient classics is first challenged and then denied. Much has been written on the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes* in France and on "The Battle of the Books" in England. The quarrels were often personal, and the makeup of the teams was sometimes bizarre. Richard Bentley, one of the greatest classical scholars of the 18th century, was a "modern" because he decisively debunked the Epistles of Phalaris and entered into polemics with the partisans of Sir William Temple, the much-loved defender of the ancients. Let us brush away these inconvenient details, though, and look at two strange coincidences.

The first coincidence is that, generally speaking, the best modern writers were on the side of the ancients. In France, the officer list of the ancients included not only Boileau but also Racine. In England, Swift and his friend Alexander Pope not only pilloried Bentley (the former in "The Battle of the Books," the latter in the *Dunciad*) but, for all their genius and originality, maintained their loyalty to the classical tradition. Much of Pope's best work consists of either direct imitations of Horatian satire or poems ("The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot") written in the same vein. The side of the moderns, on the other hand, was taken (then as now) by poetasters and "intellectuals," who drew up their own long canons of the great modern writers—most of them untalented and forgotten nobodies. Charles Perrault, the author of charming fairy tales like "Puss and Boots," was, perhaps, the greatest of the French moderns, while Bentley—who devoted his life to the ancients—is only modern in the application of critical method.

In "The Battle of the Books," Jonathan Swift, confining himself to personalities, pays little attention to what is at stake. He

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allows himself to be serious only in the little fable he tells of the spider and the bee. The spider, boasting of his superiority, derides the bee as a vagabond and "a universal plunderer upon nature" and describes himself as "a domestic animal, furnished with a native stock within myself." For proof, he points to "this large castle [i.e., his web] . . . built with my own hands, and the materials extracted altogether out of my own person."

The bee, in his own defense, defends the classical tradition of what Christian Kopff likes to call human assimilation: "I visit indeed all the flowers and blossoms of the field and garden; but whatever I collect thence enriches myself without the least injury to their beauty." The spider, on the other hand, may excel (as the moderns are fond of claiming) in mathematics, but his building "is too plain and the materials are naught." The bee hurls back the spider's boast of self-sufficiency, observing that "if we may judge of the liquor in the vessel by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful store of dirt and poison in your breast," and concludes:

> the question comes all to this; whether is the nobler being of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into excrement and venom, producing nothing at all but flybane and a cobweb; or that which, by a universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax.

What Swift realized is that the struggle is not between Racine and Euripides or between Milton and Vergil, but that the battle ranges Racine and Milton and Pope and Shelley and T.S. Eliot against the venomous little scribblers who look into themselves and find only poisonous filth. Here and there in British literature, one can meet untutored "geniuses" from the lower classes, such as James Hogg and John Clare, but even their tastes had been trained by attempting to write for a literary society nursed on the classics.

The second coincidence—even more telling—is that many of the arguments used by the moderns are the same sorts of arguments used today by the multiculturalists: traditions are not, by themselves, worthy of respect; mere antiquity is no guarantee of literary excellence; the progress of civilization has led to improvements of taste. By these criteria, Baroque art was superior both to Michelangelo and to the Elgin Marbles, while the highly mannered dramas of the 18th century were seen as an improvement upon the crude simplicity of Sophocles and Shakespeare, whose works were rewritten to suit contemporary tastes.

Because it is easier to pick up a fad than to master an art, the ignorant and untalented will always prefer the fashion of the moment to the solid accomplishments of the past. They will also run after any foreign craze that comes along. The 18th century witnessed an Oriental fad, and French intellectuals were fond of introducing exotic foreigners who could pass judgment on the inadequacies of Christendom—Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* are only the most famous example. How serious they were in their Orientalizing remains to be seen. But how serious are the multiculturalists who babble about Zen Buddhism or the Popal Vu? Do any of them, apart from a few specialists, actually know the languages that would give them access to the foreign cultures they pretend to celebrate?

Either by accident or by design, the attack upon the classics coincides with the internal subversion of Christendom. Since the 18th century, European writers and intellectuals have grown ever more skeptical of their own culture and ever more credulous about the claims made for Oriental and primitive cultures. Repudiating the rich and varied traditions of Christian mysticism and philosophy, they turn to Hindu scriptures, Zen Buddhism, and the Cabbalistic and Hermetic literatures that hold out the promise of inner peace to the spiritual and magical powers to the ambitious. As Mary Lefkowitz has shown recently, the central claim of Afrocentrism—that an ancient mystical doctrine created in Egypt is the basis of all the world's great philosophies—was invented by silly white male Freemasons whose grasp of reality was on par with that of the average tarot reader or small-town palmist.

Americans are used to thinking of the Masons as a set of philanthropic businessmen who fund charities and occasionally go to conventions where they get drunk in public and rip up hotel rooms. Many Europeans, on the other hand, speak darkly of a centuries-old conspiracy of rich and powerful Freemasons, with a past as bizarre as the history of the Maltese Falcon. Both sides are right. While American Masons derive from a reformed British tradition, the European Freemasons—and their more mystical offshoots—have been involved in every devilish plot against Christendom since even before the French Revolution.

In Italy recently, Maurizio Blondet (a respectable journalist who has written for *Il Giornale*) caused considerable stir with his little book *Gli adelphi della dissoluzione*. The focal point of Blondet's study is the ultrahighbrow publishing firm of Adelphi, presided over by hermetic novelist Roberto Calasso (a favorite with American literary degenerates). Along the way, Blondet traces the intersections of cabalistic sects, messianic cults, and enlightenment philosophies that seem to be converging in the late 20th century.

What these various groups have in common is a burning hatred for Christianity (particularly the Catholic Church), a deliberate practice and celebration of sexual depravity, particularly sodomy and incest, and a pretension to mystical wisdom that transcends the everyday knowledge of cab drivers, scholars, and scientists. Some are nominally Christian (especially Catholic); others nominally Jewish (though historically at odds with Rabbinic Judaism); but all preach the need for dissolution—moral and spiritual dissolution, yes, but also political dissolution. As one renegade Catholic intellectual explains to Blondet, the Popes have made a mistake in trying to delay the arrival of Antichrist. This remark, which is the inspiration of the book, sends the journalist looking for the meaning of *katechon* in St. Paul, and he discovers—in Thomas Aquinas and elsewhere—an ancient tradition that regarded the Roman Empire (and the Christian Church, which succeeded to its power) as the force of order preventing demonic powers from taking over our world. His researches carry him into strange places, but everywhere he finds the cult of depravity coupled with an assault on *Romanitas*.

I had wanted to think of Blondet as a well-read conspiracy monger—he does tie in stories of the Yale Skull and Bones and the CFR, for example, without actually endorsing them—but he is, for the most part, sober and restrained, insisting that he is examining a theology, not unraveling a conspiracy. Turning away from the feverish subject of his book and even assuming that all the representatives of the hermetic tradition are charlatans and their dupes, the conclusion is, nonetheless, frighten-

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ing. After all, it is really a small comfort to know that the witch trying to kill you has no supernatural powers and has to rely on hypnosis, psychotropic drugs, mental intimidation, and—if all else fails—poison. The mere knowledge that your neighbors are sticking pins in dolls and poisoning your cow, as they invoke the aid of the Prince of Darkness, should be enough to scare the pants off the editors of the *Skeptical Enquirer,* and for several centuries civilized Christians have been living cheek by jowl with would-be witches and necromancers, repeating their silly spells and practicing their dirty perversities in the hope of working us harm. It is enough to make one want to attribute prophetic insight to H.P. Lovecraft for his mythology of the Old Ones, the ancient race of demons who keep on trying to break in and destroy our world.

It is best not to get carried away. Our civilization in its long history has had its slumps and periods of revival, and it is not always clear whose side someone is fighting on. The best humanists and Reformers fought for the truth and sought to restore the lost glories of ancient literature and the primitive church. In the process, they damaged the fabric of civilization, while at the same time making possible the creation of many uniquely beautiful things: Luther's hymns and the music of Bach, the epics of Ariosto, Tasso, and Milton, the sonnets of Petrarch and Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Baudelaire. The Romantics, of course, were attracted by mysticism and horror, but they also led many of their followers back into the church. Even Baudelaire, his powerful imagination fascinated by evil, confessed in the end.

A writer's true significance may be revealed only to a later generation. These things take time, and when a premature genius like Sade came along, it was 200 years before a literary audience could be sufficiently enlightened to treat him seriously—as he is today. Sade's studied perversity is, in fact, a clue to one part of the labyrinth: the cult of depravity.

Militant homosexuals, particularly those who have received the anti-grace of AIDS, have become the heroes and martyrs of our culture, celebrated even by heterosexual intellectuals. The whole point of the AIDS propaganda blitz has nothing to do with the disease itself and rather little to do with homosexuality per se. The object is to break down the moral barriers erected against perversity, not for the sake of the perverse, but to destroy the civilization those barriers protect. To revert to the symbolic and religious terms used by Blondet, they are breaking down the walls of Rome to let in the army of Antichrist.

The attack on the classics, then, is one front in a long-standing war against Rome and against Christendom (which includes the Rabbis who fought to suppress the false messiahs, such as Sabatai Zevi, Jacob Frank and, I would add, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud). Attempts to defend the more modern parts of the curriculum, whether *Huckleberry Finn* or *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, are not only doomed to fail: they are acts of collaboration. We are what and who we are, largely because of the stories we tell, the songs we sing, the Scriptures we recite. In depriving our children of Homer, Shakespeare, and the Bible, the multiculturalists hope to smother the last rays of light given off from the embers of an almost extinct civilization.

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On the Precolumbian Zero

by Frederick Turner

For Rosa Maria, Sergio, Alejandro, Vivianne, and Marisa

(The zero of the Mayans, Olmecs, and Aztecs was devised 600 years before it first appears in the Old World among the Hindus. It is represented by a shell, *caracol* in Spanish; in the vigesimal system of counting, it is denoted by the suffix *-alli* for multiples of the base 20. Carved on stelae it became a flower, or *flor* in Spanish, *xochitl* in the Nahuatl language.)

Cloaca of the sea, its salt perfume
Is all the money in Time's purse.
The zero is no cipher, but a womb.
Its fruit is nothing but the universe.

The zero's not an absence, but a glyph
That's always pregnant to be said.
The splay-head moguls grasp the rods of if,
Wherewith they join the living and the dead.

The only thing that nothing cannot spawn
Is nothing. You would need a god
Greater than master Tlaloc, to undawn
That first day as it bursts forth from its pod.

But still the naught's as silent as a clam;
The dark canals of Xochimilco
Dream in the rain behind their mountain-dam,
Cloudy volcanoes over Tulyehualco,

Where floating gardens swamped with azure flowers,
Shut fast as *caracols* or shells,
Wait for the morning light through the small hours,
And Sunday's twenty centuries of bells.

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Invisible but Present

by Zbigniew Herbert

That Zbigniew Herbert cannot be here with us deserves a few words of comment. Zbigniew Herbert is 71 years old, and an intellectual of that age in the United States is usually perfectly able to travel, speak, and enjoy the golden years. Czeslaw Milosz, another Polish poet and Nobel Prize winner, is 13 years older than Herbert, yet he gives poetry readings and travels around the world. But Czeslaw Milosz spent his life in the United States and in other free countries, including pre-World War II Poland. Zbigniew Herbert spent his life in Soviet-occupied Poland. The last time I talked to him on the phone, he could barely speak. His illness is not so much a function of his age as it is a fruit of many years of privation. The political system whose center was in Moscow not only wrecked the economies of Soviet-dominated countries, it also destroyed the health of their citizens. As I deplore Zbigniew Herbert's absence here today, I cannot but remember its real causes. And I am comforted by the realization that The Ingersoll Prizes promote a worldview which, one hopes, will make a repetition of the Soviet experience all but impossible.

—Ewa M. Thompson

I wish to convey to The Ingersoll Foundation my sincere thanks for the award, which is as prestigious as it is unexpected. I bow deeply before the memory of the award's patron. I could not, in the brief remarks uttered here, adequately acknowledge the greatest poet of the 20th century. An attempt to do so would quickly slip into banality. Instead, let me tell you about my encounters with T.S. Eliot. The first encounter did not take place in the silence of a library but in the midst of a raging war, with barbarism let loose. At that time, universities, libraries, museums seemed to belong to the world of mythology and fantasy rather than to everyday reality.

I was a teenager then, and I lived in an atmosphere of daily and direct danger. One day I stumbled upon a piece of paper, a page torn out of an anthology containing T.S. Eliot's early poem "*La Figlia che Piange.*" It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast: the world of chaos and fury that surrounded me, and this poem in a soft and elegiac key, so abounding in delicacy and tenderness. Since that time, I was drawn to the qualities which Eliot's poetry radiates. The tearful girl's little hand led me to Eliot's great works: *Four Quartets*, the plays, and the magnificent palimpsest of *The Waste Land*. The moment I read that poem of Eliot's, I decided to get acquainted with all of his works. But this was not easy. When World War II was over, in the countries of "real socialism" T.S. Eliot became a forbidden poet. Such banishment did not hurt him, of course, but it disgraced the Soviet-bred censors and book burners.

I said that I got acquainted with Eliot's poem by chance, but on second thought this is not true; in fact, it would be blasphemous to say so. Even today, I strongly feel that this first poem

Zbigniew Herbert received The Ingersoll Foundation's 1995 T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, for which this was his acceptance speech. Ewa M. Thompson is a professor of Slavic Studies at Rice University.

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was a gift, that it was bestowed on me by fate.

Please forgive me if I speak an unfashionable language, one ill-adjusted to the analytical epoch in which we live. Yet I think that literature should not yield to the temptation of "keeping up with the times" and genuflecting before the advances of scientific research. Literature is ruled by its own laws, and it disciplines itself according to its own rules; it addresses itself to the regions of the soul untouched by scholarly analysis. Words such as "progress" and "advance," so ardently worshiped today, do not provide a key to literature. Such is my conviction, and also the justification for my work.

I much admire the men of learning, but I doubt that they could contribute to the restoration of order in the human soul. I doubt that even the most advanced research could bring a breakthrough in curing spiritual illnesses. At the same time, one should not fall in for the worship of the alleged perfection of the premodern age. Some say that our ancestors, whose worldview was built on a solid foundation of faith and a stable social order, were better anchored in reality, and happier than we; that they were able to reach spiritual harmony more easily than we. There exists, of course, a cornucopia of edifying examples that support such views.

Here is Cicero's story about the young Roman tribune named Scipio who visited paradise in his sleep. The paradise turned out not to be otherworldly at all. It looked rather like the capital of the Empire, and was inhabited by the spirits of the great Roman statesmen. With ostentation, they urged the young Scipio to work incessantly for the good of the Republic, submit himself to its laws, and be always ready to die for it. Thus the netherworld extended a helpful hand to the earthly reality of the Roman Empire.

Similarly, William Wordsworth once described Sir Isaac Newton readying himself for sleep. Lying on his pillow, Sir Isaac serenely watched the moon and the stars of whose assigned course he was so sure. And during his daily walks, the sickly Immanuel Kant liked to imbibe both the smell of horseradish and the aroma of the harmonious universe.

But we could not possibly ascertain whether these and other ancestors of ours were less prone to metaphysical disorders than we, even though the world that surrounded them seemed relatively harmonious and comprehensible. We should not engage in comparing the state of their souls and ours. The most astounding scholarly discoveries of today cannot help us in solving these problems of human identity.

Literature, however, *is* relevant to these problems. Literature and its only subject matter, the only game it pursues: the human person. Literature has pursued this game for millennia. It keeps pulling out of the anonymous human mass an individual (always in the singular, never in the plural) to whom it gives the body and soul, face and character, and whom it leads through a certain course of events toward, perhaps, an immortality. It pursues that person's earthly fate. It lights up the brief moment between two dark unknowns: before and after. It insists that the individual whose life it illuminates is unrepeatable, that he is a person, and thus different from anything else in the universe. It diligently researches that person's virtues and trespasses, dreams and crimes. Sometimes it offers forgiveness, at other times it is unyielding and austere as if it itself had to answer for its judgments to a higher authority.

Literature is down-to-earth, but it yields a sympathetic ear to dreams. It understands solitude *and* human solidarity. It holds sovereign power over time. T.S. Eliot expressed it best as he discovered the undercurrent of poetry under the pedestrian rules of grammar:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.

Every year, I undertake an imaginary journey to Greece, in order to experience pure joy and to drink from the sources of our civilization. The Acropolis and the Greek temples in Sicily, lonesome columns, and the Epidaurus theater: these are perhaps the greatest concentrations of beauty in the world. I repeat to myself that beauty is a vehicle for passion and virtue, and this thought offers peace. Yet an evening spent in one's library over the volumes detailing Greek history may fill one with horror and demolish the comfortable thought of past perfection. Sophocles, Socrates, and Plato witnessed events that seem carbon copies of present-day tribal wars, so deftly served up in newspapers.

Literature shares with man his solitude and the urge to oppose evil. My philosophy professor, Henryk Elzenberg, used to say, "One has to undertake, with all the courage one can muster, a struggle to bring into being areas of order and meaning in this transitory world of chaos and cruelty, fatuity and uncertainty."

I think, indeed I know, that in this struggle we are assisted by Thomas Stearns Eliot. Though invisible, he is present among us. c

LIBERAL ARTS

I'M OK, YOU'RE OK

The April 16 edition of the *Rockford Register Star* reported that John Bisbee, the lawyer for Bruce Black, a man in Urbana, Illinois, facing federal charges for collecting child pornography, has demanded that the charges be dropped on the grounds that pedophiles are unable to control their desires, and that punishing them would therefore be "cruel and unusual." Prosecuting Black, he insists, would be akin to "prosecuting an epileptic for having a seizure."

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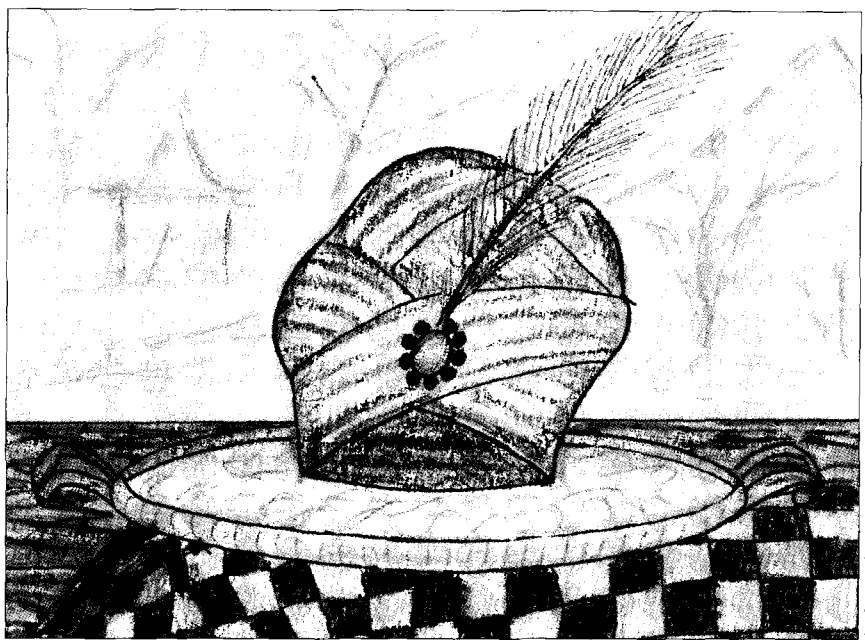
Don't Give Us India

The Multiculturalist Case

by George Watson



Stephen Anderson

"Don't give us India," Samuel Johnson once told Boswell, when the talk was about how widely mankind differed in its view of chastity and polygamy. Montesquieu, he said, the great pioneer of anthropology, was in many ways a fellow of genius. But

> whenever he wants to support a strange opinion, he quotes you the practice of Japan, or of some other distant country, of which he knows nothing. To support polygamy he tells you of the island of Formosa . . .

"Giving us India" means offering an easy moral excuse, and Johnson was above all concerned that anthropology might be used to justify abandoning our moral certainties in favor of a facile relativism. He was no doubt aware, what is more, that you do not need to cite foreign and exotic lands—minorities at home will do—in which case he would find no shortage of relativists if he were alive today. We are always being given India or Japan nowadays, or gays or blacks or women. There is even a familiar barrage of polysyllables to characterize the mood, like multiculturalism, positive discrimination, subculture, Eurocentricity, and political correctness. Some of these causes may be justified, but the more confident claims of multiculturalism now need to be scanned, especially the notion that the world has some sort of moral duty to defend, even to promote, a variety of incompatible moral views in order to uphold the due rights of minorities, whether one's own or others. In its latter-day form, which involves encouraging as well as accepting ethical diversity, it is a notion far odder than anything that Johnson or Boswell knew.

Multiculturalism offers itself as a defense of the outnumbered and oppressed: of subcultures which, rightly considered, have as good a right to exist as traditional culture itself. Traditional culture is conceived of here as white, male, and dead, and it is above all the humanism of the Dead White European Male (DWEM) that the multiculturalist most commonly has in his sights. The case can be openly self-interested, as in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979), a book by a New York Palestinian protesting against alleged Western contempt for the cultural traditions of Asia; or it can be made by whites against whites. To go back a century: it was a titillating implication of J.G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, which began to appear in 1890, that Christian dogmas like Virgin Birth are the less plausible because they can be paralleled in other messianic cults—all of which, as an argument, struck a subtle blow against the Western religious tradition and its claim to uniqueness. Frazer loved to give us India, so to speak, which helps to explain why his big book was enormously influential in an era of advancing skepticism. It can be profoundly exciting, after all, to lose faith in one's own gods and heroes. In a Spanish city in 1992, for example, an unknown artist decorated a large public wall with a painting meant to belittle the 500th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America; it shows a crowd of brown Caribs laughing heartily at a medieval Spaniard, and one of them is announcing: "He says his name is Christopher Columbus and that he has discovered us." The implication that you would have to be some sort of neoimperialistic Eurocentrist to be impressed by what Columbus did in 1492 is perfectly plain;

George Watson, who is a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, is the author of The Certainty of Literature *and* British Literature since 1945.

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though it is more interesting, perhaps, to reflect that the paintwork was almost certainly made by whites rather than West Indians: by a modern J.G. Frazer, so to speak, rather than by an Edward Said. Multiculturalism can be a matter of idealism or a matter of self-interest. You do not even have to be a lesbian, it is rumored, in order to be pro-lesbian; you certainly do not have to be black in order to be pro-black. Montesquieu, after all, was neither Japanese nor Formosan.

The mood, predictably, has caused its own natural reaction. To take a moderate instance, and one that stops well short of the platform oratory of Mr. Pat Buchanan: the Prince of Wales, speaking in Stratford-on-Avon, has recently protested against "a general flight from our great literary heritage," evidently with Stratford's most famous son in mind. "Shakespeare's roots are ours, his language is ours, his culture ours," said the prince, adding that "hanging on to our cultural roots is one way of preserving national identities." He must have expected a storm, and he got several. Alan Sinfield, an academic critic, promptly accused him and other defenders of humanistic education of failing to think clearly about who "we" are. In traditional literary education, he complained,

> the implicit reading position was MAN: he informed the text and the critic. Cultural differences were insignificant in comparison with Man. . . . If a lower-class person, woman, student, person of color, lesbian or gay man did not "respond" to "the text," we thought it was because they [sic] were reading partially, wrongly.

In other words, teaching Shakespeare has encouraged a lot of people to despise their own subcultures, even to abandon them, whereas the humanistic notion of a common nature is in fact a mirage: "our 'humanity' is not an essential condition toward which we may aspire, but what people have as a consequence of being socialized into human beings." It is consequently wrong to induce minorities to feel inferior. No wonder, Sinfield went on, if Adrienne Rich is angry to be told that her lesbian poems are "universal," implying (as she has complained) "a denial, a kind of resistance, a refusal to read and hear what I've actually written, to acknowledge what I am."

The multicultural model of intelligence is here laid bare; once again we are being given India. On the one hand there is culture—in the case of modern Western man, a culture of DWEMs like Shakespeare; on the other hand, a set of subcultures like the nonwhite and the homosexual, fighting for equality of recognition after long centuries, it is alleged, of oppression, misprision, and neglect. The mood has even invaded ancient history. Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, for example, a book that has plainly told a lot of multiculturalists what they eagerly wanted to hear, attributes the rise of classical Greek civilization to extra-European, and above all African, sources; and its first volume, "The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985" (1987), claims that credit for the Greek achievement has been misappropriated by Europeans since the 18th century by a sinister mixture of romantic enthusiasm, white racism—how, it was once thought, *could* Periclean Athens be indebted to blacks?—and low cunning; even though the ancients themselves, as Herodotus illustrates, knew perfectly well that their culture derived from outside Europe altogether, from Egypt to Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the film *Dances with Wolves*, based on a novel by Michael Blake, has inverted the Western formula familiar in Hollywood to show the white conquest of North America after the Civil War from a supposedly Red Indian point of view, its whites brutal and mean, apart from a hero and heroine who change loyalties, its Red Indians brutal and heroic. In both book and movie, white man speaks with forked tongue, and both make the echoing point that white culture has been traditionally overvalued, and that brutality toward others, at least if you have a white face, simply will not do. With the death of class war, the movement for subculture is here. The workers of the world may have missed their chance to unite, but lesbians of the world, and even Red Indians, still may.

There are several unnoticed contradictions in this case. One is implicit in the view that moral principles are no more than the expression of a given community in a given age. But in that event, the moral case for subcultures, too, could be no more than that. Sinfield even uses the supremely moral term "right": Adrienne Rich was right, he argues, to be angry when friends praised her lesbian poems as universal in their appeal. But who, in this instance, is saying who is right? A pair of middle-aged whites, it must be answered, of some academic training, known as Sinfield and Rich. There can be no reasonable doubt about the fact that they have been socialized into believing what they believe, and indeed one could easily identify their sources, since they both employ a ghetto-rhetoric highly reminiscent of Anglo-America, France, and Germany in the 1960's, when they were both young. Their pleas are couched in late 20th-century English, what is more, and their habits of life, one hardly needs to be told, are middle-class. Both seek to make a moral case for a homosexual subculture. But that case, whatever it amounts to, is not exempt from the moral constraints of their age and place, unless the mere claim to be liberated guarantees liberation itself. The dogma of self-fulfillment, after all, is no less a moral assertion than the dogma of submission to divine law.

A second contradiction follows from the first. If all judgments are socially conditioned and the worse for it, then so is the judgment that subcultures of race and sex deserve tolerance or approbation. Some intellectual fashions, it may be said, are intrinsically admirable, and the fashion for nonwhite cultures and sexual diversity may have something to be said for it: "Adrienne Rich is right to be angry . . . " But if some causes are good as well as conditioned, like this one, then a view can be conditioned and also good; so it is not an objection to a *view* to say that it was conditioned: in which case teaching Shakespeare in traditional style in school may be no bad thing, and the Prince of Wales may after all have a point.

The truth of a judgment, in short, is independent of the factors that have caused it to be held, and one can believe a proposition on highly inadequate grounds, or none, which might yet be true. My own grounds for believing that the circumference of a circle is always more than three times its diameter, for example—an irrational number beginning 3.14159 and conventionally expressed by the Greek letter *pi*—are wholly inadequate, since as a nonmathematician I cannot even begin to understand how that figure was arrived at. Nonetheless it is so, and I am right to believe it. Credulity can be a good idea, in fact, and conditioning a blessing; and reverence before professional opinion is not always servile or silly. Why else would people consult doctors and lawyers, after all, pay for their advice and follow it? Or consult critics and reviewers, for that matter, before buying a book or a theater ticket? Critics, after all, are professionals too.

Sinfield tries to rubbish the judgment of professional critics

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by arguing that humanists, in their day, won the argument for Shakespeare by suppressing, or at best ignoring, subcultures of race and sex and by exploiting a potent rhetoric: "Because the literary-critical discourse was powerful, many learnt to use it well," he writes in an apparent non sequitur. (Are there not powerful rhetorics which can only be acquired by a few?) But they only learnt it, he argues, at the expense of "abandoning subculture allegiances," like being black or homosexual.

But that, on reflection, looks like an implausible picture of Western cultural assumptions. Sappho never quite lost her fame as a poet since the sixth century B.C., when she lived and died, though so few of her poems survive outside fragments that it is hard to know whether she deserved it or not. That hardly points to a reliable prejudice, over the centuries, against the homosexual literary tradition. Or again, jazz is rightly extolled as an expression of the musical genius of the American black, and there was never a time when its origins were supposed to be anything else. Again, Milton's *Paradise Lost* does not suggest that the early European reaction to Columbus was contemptuous of the original inhabitants of the Caribbean; on the contrary, Milton implies that the Caribs were gloriously innocent before Europeans came to corrupt them, much like Adam and Eve at the Fall:

> Such of late
> Columbus found the American so girt
> With feathered cincture, naked else and wild
> Among the trees on isles and woody shores.

The notion that the humanist tradition has consistently failed to value nonwhite and nonheterosexual culture, in the face of all that, looks hard to sustain.

We are all mongrels, as the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes has recently remarked, and the result of invasions. That is a rational view. But then the multiculturalist argument does not survive on its rational merits. In fact, those merits are so meager that even those who put the case, whether on behalf of women, blacks, or members of sexual minorities, must surely have something else in mind. But if the rational merits of the multiculturalist case do not amount to much, its motives may still be interesting. In fact, this could be one of those occasions when imputing motives might be the quickest way to the heart of that new mystery of our time: its sudden passion for minority culture.

One motive, I suggest, may arise from the odd fact that the sexual revolution and the fading of Western imperialism happened, coincidentally, at much the same time. Africa, or most of it, became independent in 1960-62; Vietnam, which some regarded as an instance of United States imperialism, saw an American withdrawal 11 years later, in 1973. The moment of feminist and homosexual emancipation was sandwiched neatly between, in the late 1960's. That helps to explain, if not to justify, the familiar multiculturalist conjunction of skin-color and sexual orientation, as if the arguments for taking blacks and homosexuals seriously were much the same. In fact, the possibility of being for one and against the other is nowhere allowed for in Sinfield's argument, which is all about Hurrah for Subcultures wherever and whatever they may be.

But the silences in the multiculturalist case show that there are still subcultures which, even in that view, deserve no applause at all. The *fatwa* or sentence of death pronounced by the ayatollahs of Iran against Salman Rushdie for his novel *Satanic Verses* (1988), when it first appeared, is a case in point. Muslim militants in the West are a minority, after all, and an embattled minority, often (like the Indian Muslim minority in Britain) with marked racial characteristics, and armed with a cause. So, for that matter, is the National Front in France, which is another militant minority—a white one, in this instance—opposed to immigration and detesting the liberal, humanistic assumptions of the old parties in the French Republic as threatening a tribal integrity and way of life which is traditionally French. A subculture can be racist then, as well as antiracist. One can easily imagine a Sinfield-style argument, or a Rich-style argument, refurbished to support the Iranian ayatollahs or the National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen: that the liberal rejection of racism represents "a denial, a kind of resistance, a refusal to read and hear" what they have actually written and said (to adapt Adrienne Rich's remark) or to acknowledge what they are. That could be said by the National Front, after all, in all sincerity and in all accuracy. Humanistic education has traditionally taught Frenchmen, or tried to teach them, about the Rights of Man, notably the French revolutionary notion that all men are equal before the law. Sinfield will have none of that view.

> Our humanity is not an essential condition toward which we may aspire, but what people have as a consequence of being socialized into human communities . . .

But if that is right, then the poor Muslim from north Africa seeking a new life in France is rightly to be branded as distinct in what he is, and distinct in the rights he can claim, which is the essence of the National Front or neofascist case against him: that members of other races and religions are not trivially different from Frenchmen but fundamentally so. The French National Front might handily adopt the rhetoric of multiculturalism, in that case, to block immigration and send the Arabs home.

It is an argument yet to be heard, but it may be heard at any moment. Arabs and Muslims, after all, because they were socialized into believing in Islam—taught it in youth, that is to say—and what is more, it might be argued, the democratic parties of the French Republic are antiracist because they too were once socialized into that view, having been taught the Rights of Man in school. There is a further, perilous step in the multiculturalists' case to be considered. Humanism, too, is no doubt a minority view. Most human beings have never heard about human rights, it is plausible to suggest, in which case liberal humanism is a subculture in the world at large; and in some parts of the world, such as Burma, China, and Iran, a much oppressed subculture. But in that case it would deserve the respect that Sinfield and Rich demand and yet seem unready to give. The case for Shakespeare courageously made in Stratford by the Prince of Wales looks better and better, in the sense that the case against it looks more and more confused. In fact, the moment for a new humanism may have arrived, and it will be the moment when it is seen to be what it is: a minority view, an oppressed view; in a word, a subculture of its own.

The multiculturalist confusion is not new, and its origins are worth a moment's consideration. Those origins are often avowedly Marxist, which is to say early Victorian; and

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Marx's famous claim that it is history that molds consciousness rather than the other way around lies at the heart of it. The British Marxist historian E.H. Carr, who died in 1982, exemplified the doctrine all his working life, and his book *What Is History?* (1961) is a classic statement of that view. The opening chapter, "The Historian and His Facts," makes the implausible assumption that facts in their nature are certain and interpretations no more than personal, though the years Carr spent writing a history of the Bolshevik Party should have taught him that many of the facts of history are hotly contested, some interpretations wholly certain, and that it can be difficult, even impossible on occasion, to distinguish one from another. It is a question of fact, for example, whether Stalin believed in Hitler's friendship when he signed an alliance with him in August 1939, and a much contested one; a matter of interpretation whether the pact that made Nazism and Communism allies was justified or not, and one nowadays hardly contested at all. Literary studies, too, are rich in such counterinstances. Homeric scholars, for example, differ as to whether the *Iliad* was written by one man or by more than one, which is a question of fact; not at all about whether it is a great poem, which is a question of value. The assumption that facts are distinguished by being agreed, then, and judgments of value by being contested, is simply nonsense.

Carr then shifts his argument from nonsense to contradiction. "We can view the past, and achieve our understanding of the past, only through the eyes of the present," he writes; nonetheless, he goes on, the function of the historian is to "master and understand" the past as "the key to the understanding of the present." But if the past can *only* be understood through the eyes of the present, what is the implied contrast here? Presumably by understanding the past through the eyes of the past, which (it is perhaps implied) would be better eyes: at least that is the most natural sense to put on the word "only" here. So Carr seems to be implying that all historical understanding is misunderstanding, since the historian, he says, can never see with the eyes of the past; in which case he can only misunderstand. But if the historian can only misunderstand, how can he reasonably be asked to understand past or present at all? The multiculturalist case is that we are all imprisoned, of necessity, in a social framework not of our own making. But if we are all imprisoned, then we should try to respect some historians, at least, who write out of the prison cell of their conditioning. Presumably Carr would concede that some historians sometimes get something right; presumably he believes that he himself, for instance, is sometimes getting it right. It is hardly possible even to imagine a subject where all the conclusions are wrong.

But how tight, in that case, is the prison? It is a notable fact about ethnicity that not everybody, whether black, brown, or white, admits to being locked in, and that some want to see themselves free and others immured. Edward Said, for example, in *Orientalism*, thinks the West stereotypes the East and patronizes it, but as a Palestinian living in New York he writes with a confidence that suggests that he, at least, is getting it right. So not everybody is doing time in the prison of early conditioning. How, in that case, does one tell those who are inside from those who are not? It is here that the multiculturalist case begins to look partisan. It is right for nonwhites to stereotype white views, apparently, as Said does, but wrong the other way around. It is right for nonwhite politicians to tell nonwhite voters to support nonwhite candidates, but wrong for white politicians to tell white voters to vote white. It is right to praise jazz as an expression of black culture, but wrong to praise Shakespeare as an expression of English culture. And so on.

There is a way out of the multiculturalist maze, however, and a black writer may be chosen to show us what it is. In a recent lecture, Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright, novelist, and Nobel Prize winner, has justly derided the multiculturalist case. As a boy in colonial Nigeria, he has told, he read Sophocles in an English version to his lasting delight, and felt himself no more remote from the world of ancient Greece than an Etonian schoolboy would have felt. Which is right. What presumption is there, after all, that the Athens of the fifth century B.C. is more like 20th-century Europe than 20th-century West Africa? Or that, to speak generally, you have to be white to value white authors, or black to value black? The hidden racism of the multiculturalist case has often been remarked. What it now needs, as refutation, is a sign like Soyinka's that humanism is not a fantasy of Dead White European Males but a living faith that works. c

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The Dolphin Hotel and Epcot Center

by Frederick Turner

Michael Graves creates and Disneyworld
Absorbs the immense insult without scar.
The force of evolution is unfurled:
Consciousness stammers, awed, touched, jocular.

O lights of ancient pylons across water!
O all the coarse simplicity of how
The past renews itself upon the altar
We made the present be, the dead dry now;

O shaking artificial lights against the lake,
O music breathing perfect from the arbors,
O Paris, Casablanca! O how fake
The real thing becomes, its lights, its harbors;

O guardians of the future, one in three:
O Mickey, Donald, Goofy, sing to me.

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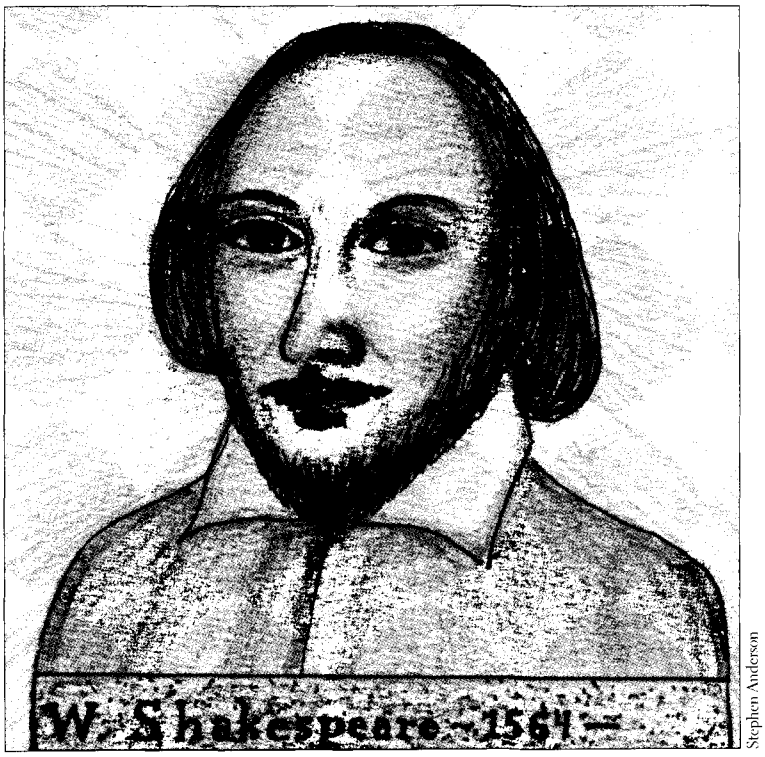
The Portable Shakespeare

by George Garrett



Stephen Anderson

Nothing new here, really. Nothing that hasn't been hashed and rehashed by my betters, the true scholars and critics whose faithful quest for knowledge has sometimes ended in earned wisdom for all of us. Sometimes not. . . . Anyway, some things, old and new, are worth saying again (and again), indeed must be said even at the risk of repetition and redundancy. Shakespeare can take it, will survive it as his art has survived his own age and the ages afterward during which, each according to his own limits and follies, our ghostly forefathers have managed to misread and to misperform and to misinterpret his works and words without doing, even at their worst, more than denting damage.

Worst of all, of course, are our own. We have been able, thanks to theoretical trickery, to ignore the substance of his work in favor of the comforting assumption that neither the author's text nor his intent and meaning mean anything or matter much, if at all. Fuss and fume and argue as they will, in Fish ponds or at the Gates of Harvard, they cannot quite get around the undeniable fact that he is still what he has been—our language's leading poet. But what is a poet, major or minor, when compared to any run-of-the-mill, end-of-the-century theorist eager to expound the latest, tedious, simpleminded theories of race, sex, gender, class, ethnicity and . . . whatever? Still, Shakespeare lived on, basically unharmed, through the revolutionary 17th century, the savage rationality of the 18th, survived Darwin and Marx and Freud in the 19th, and gives every indication of outlasting the manifestos of Stanley Fish or Richard Rorty or Norman O. Brown or . . . *whoever*.

And there is much that we need to be reminded of and to consider. That (to borrow from Mark Van Doren) it cannot have been difficult for him to write his plays. It was easy for him or he would not have done it and done it so well. That, as he wrote his plays and, more important for him, produced and acted in them, he couldn't possibly have believed that he was writing for future ages. True, he had high hopes for his sonnets and the other literary poems, hoped and may have believed, as he seems to, that they would last a while, maybe even outlast him. But the plays were, with all due respect, expendable. That others thought otherwise and after his death went to the expense and trouble to collect his work in the first folio only serves to emphasize the ephemerality of plays in the literary scene. He seems to have written his plays (and, oh yes, he wrote them, nobody else, no serious question about that) to help the company of players of which he was an important stockholder and a player of distinction. The money, the real money that he was after and earned, the money that allowed him to be, even in a free-wheeling age, astonishingly "upwardly mobile," moving (as the myth has it and is probably accurate enough) from the raggedy fringes of things, to player and shareholder and, finally, able to call himself a certified gentleman, crest and all, able to be a landowner in and around Stratford, owner, among other things, of the best house in town, New Place, with its gardens and its ten taxable fireplaces. Lived simply and cheaply in London, as best we can tell from this and that, clearly saving his money, as much as he could (and at times it was very good money, indeed) for the goal that he realized, coming home to Stratford to live under one roof with his wife and children and kinfolk. And

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he accomplished that.

That others in the game of making plays—Marlowe and Kyd and Greene, for example, even Ben Jonson, though he was luckier than he had any right to be—flared brightly as talents and many came to bad and sad ends. Their lives are more interesting to think about because they are perfectly imaginable, then or now. The good deal that we do know about Shakespeare's life tells us that it was a quiet, sober life, first to last. All his great adventures, in that age of adventuring, are there in his words and works, the creatures of his imagination, the power and glory of which is beyond imagining.

That from his works there are clues and keys to the man. That he is the perfect Elizabethan of the second generation of Elizabeth's reign. That he shares the same education that his audience did, and that it was a good one, too. He was spared the pains and pleasures of the university. Just look what happened to "the university wits." (Marlowe dead on the floor, murdered in a barroom brawl.) That Shakespeare so exactly shared the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of his audience that he is almost anonymous, at least in the conventional contemporary sense of "personality." He earned an enviable reputation, but in no way could be called (then or now) a celebrity. That he was not a rebel, either. The best fiction about him (so far) is Anthony Burgess's *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964). But Burgess had to cheat, making Shakespeare, albeit in his "lost" years, a modern artist full of rage and rebellion, an angry young hippie of 1964. Not bloody likely. It seems pretty clear that Shakespeare as we know him, in his work, was in no way subversive, though, like everybody else in his time, he had mixed feelings about many things.

The remarkable thing for us to remember is how free he was, how free *they* were to consider any and all aspects of the human condition, social and political complexities ancient and modern, without benefit of what we call "freedom of speech." In fact, it was a time when you could be whipped or branded or even lose a hand or two for certain kinds of subjects and libels. None of that seems to have inhibited Shakespeare much. What is missing in his plays? Well, maybe modern pornography which is certainly absent. Instead he can be and *is* bawdy even in surprising places like the love scenes of *Romeo and Juliet*. Think about it: how very few of our writers, popular or "literary," can handle the language and drama of simultaneous, mixed, or contrary feelings. Think, precious First Amendment or not, how many topics and subjects are dutifully avoided by our writers, as unacceptable, unthinkable, self-destructive. The day before the Earl of Essex rebelled against his Queen, he treated his rebels to a special production of Shakespeare's *Richard the Second*, most likely, it is believed, for the sake of the deposition scene. The Queen was not amused but never for a moment held it against Shakespeare or his company. Days later they were performing for her at Court. It taxes credulity to imagine any modern head of state doing the same thing.

Shakespeare lives on in our time, finally, because he lived fully in the right time and at the right place and was not only a good and decent man but also one who earned repute in his lifetime (and in memory) for being so. He lived well and quietly and lives on most richly in his works. Those riches most likely will outlast all our own. A safe bet. Meantime, in its wisdom, the *New York Times Magazine* (Barry Singer, "All Shakespeare, All the Time: The Bard has never been this popular in America—on stage, soaps and bubble gum wrappers," June 16, 1996) tells us: "It's wondrous and strange how often, and where, Shakespeare turns up across America, his characters infinitely malleable, his themes permanently pertinent." We learn that, among many things headed for us, at us, like it or not, is another film of *Hamlet*, this one directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Billy Crystal and Robin Williams.

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On the Bach St. Matthew Passion

Holy Saturday 1995

by Frederick Turner

Again a god goes underground,
Showing a world that never learns to see
That all authority is bought and bound
By blood unspeakable and agony.

Pity all kings and presidents.
If they've not paid already, they will pay.
Forgive their arrogance, incompetence,
And till it is a sin, you must obey.

Myth bought by wounding of the tongue
Threads with its muteness all the pearls of words;
A spear thrust through the vessel of the lung
Breaks silence into most miraculous sherds.

Soul of the world, smashed to your tomb,
How do you bear that monstrous weight of guilt?
Ah, king, who now endure your never-ending doom,
How do you bear the world that it has built?

Across one hemisphere the flowers
Blush through the continents in white and red:
Tongues of the earth, fed with the freshening showers
Of white blood from a god-king who is dead.

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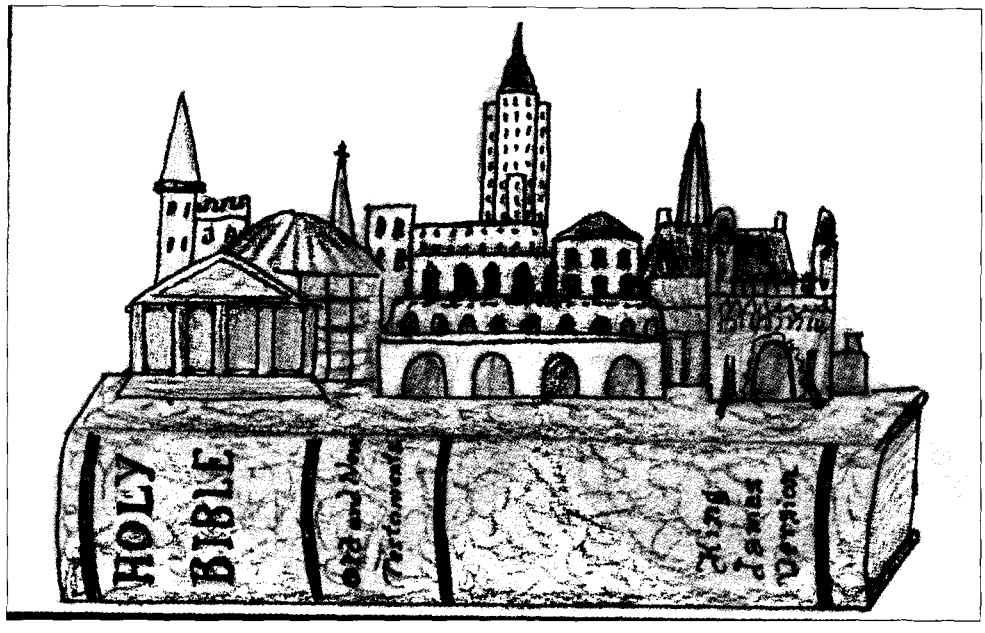
The Unbanable Book

The Bible, Past and Present

by Harold O.J. Brown



Stephen Anderson

A recent full-page advertisement in the *Chicago Tribune*, which no longer calls itself "The World's Greatest Newspaper," listed four documents that supposedly are foundational: the Magna Carta, the Treaty of Versailles, the Declaration of Independence, and the Infiniti Retailer Pledge. These four, according to the advertiser, Infiniti, are totally trustworthy, because: "A promise is a promise." Unfortunately, at least for the reader with some knowledge of modern history, the Versailles treaty is hardly an attractive pattern: it was one of the worst documents ever foisted on the human race. It violated President Wilson's Fourteen Points, the pledge given to the Central Powers to obtain the Armistice of 1918; it falsely defined the origins of the war and dishonestly fastened the guilt on Germany alone; it plundered the already impoverished Central European states, and it set the stage for the resumption of war in 1939. The Magna Carta produced better results, of course, and so did the Declaration of Independence.

Infiniti's advertisement is mentioned here because it shows an astonishing lack of historical awareness, both of the documents that actually have made history, and of the extent to which the promises and pledges they made have been fulfilled or may yet be fulfilled. This is ignorance not only on the part of the Japanese manufacturer, but also on that of the American advertising agency and the mostly American prospective purchasers.

Of course, the Japanese can hardly be expected to have an easy familiarity with the foundations and fundamental documents of Western civilization, any more than Westerners have with those of East Asia. Nevertheless, the advertising agency *is* American. It is a bit surprising to observe its naiveté about the foundations of its own society. Can the agency really expect buyers to be encouraged by the thought that an Infiniti is as trustworthy as the Treaty of Versailles? This advertisement is only one symptom among many of the degree to which modern Americans are cut off from their own spiritual roots. If they said, "The Magna Carta, the Stamp Act, and the Ribbentrop-Molotov treaty," the advertisement might be no less effective.

Not every society quickly forgets the soil out of which it grew; cultural memories and influences can persist for centuries, even for millennia. Two thousand years after Homer, the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire knew him and honored his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as part of the foundation of their own 1,000-year-old Christian culture. Byzantine Christian civilization was built on the Bible and the Church Fathers, not on Homer or Plato and Aristotle, but after some initial hostility to its pagan heritage, Greek Christian culture learned to cherish it again. In a similar way, although the Protestant Reformation rejected the authority of Roman Catholicism, it quickly came to honor and utilize much of what it found in the heritage of the Greek and Latin Fathers. John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* abounds in citations of the fathers and doctors of the Greek and Roman churches. It has remained for Christians of the late 20th century to forget the sources of their religious life almost as thoroughly as the general American culture has forgotten Homer and almost everyone of merit since him.

In contemporary America, historical memory hardly exists; happenings a quarter-century old are treated as epoch-making. The Beatles and Woodstock have been repeatedly remembered, rememorialized, and recelebrated, and Elvis Presley has a commemorative stamp, but who knows today what happened at Versailles in 1919? If we have so soon forgotten Versailles and

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the battles in which our own still-living relatives fought, is it surprising that so few remember who toppled the towers of Ilium, or threw down the walls of Jericho?

One of the reasons for the loss of historical memory is the fact that our culture has turned away from print to the electronic media. Books are permanent, or somewhat so; the images on the screen like the sounds from speakers vanish when the current dies. Over 2,500 years ago, a book changed a society; during the intervening centuries that one book, expanded 60-fold, became the foundation of the society of which we are the latest and perhaps—God forbid—the last inheritors.

In the seventh century B.C., we have the first explicit account of a book that made history. According to the account in Joshua, after the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, they erected 12 stones taken from the river as "a memorial to the sons of Israel forever" (Joshua 4:7). The memory of that land-taking has survived more than 3,000 years, and has led to the establishment of modern Israel on much of the same land that Joshua conquered. After Joshua's stones, for several centuries Israel continued to cherish sacred objects, manna from the wanderings in the desert, Aaron's rod, and the Tables of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:4), but such things could be plundered and disappear. What could not be plundered so easily and made to disappear was the Word held fast in Scripture: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

Before those holy relics of Israel's pilgrimage disappeared in successive plunderings and devastations of the Temple, something more lasting had taken their place. The stones set up by Joshua as well as those given at Sinai to Moses were to disappear, but not the words that tell of them. A single incident—it may be familiar only to historians of Judaism and zealous Bible readers—may be taken as symbolic of the impact that *ta Biblia*, literally, "the Books," and in our parlance, the Bible, would come to have in the world: establishing, and to a great extent preserving, what we now call Western or Judeo-Christian civilization. Without the Bible there would still be a geographic West, but there would be no Western civilization as we know it.

Exactly what happened 26 centuries ago in Jerusalem? Judah, the smaller of the two branches of the divided kingdom of Solomon, had just witnessed the conquest of its sister-kingdom Israel. The protection that God had granted a few decades earlier was not repeated, and Assyria took the tribes of the north into captivity. Jerusalem still stood intact, but its society was demoralized, its temple neglected. The young King Josiah determined to change things, and ordered the refurbishment of the sacred building. The cleanup produced unexpected results: instead of a mere renovation of its temple, the whole society was revived. A priest found a book, a scribe read it to a king, and society went through a salutary if short-lived transformation. The Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament were not even to be completed until three centuries later, after the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon, but even before the fall of Jerusalem, when Israel's sacred objects were lost, the written book, or rather scroll, had begun to show what a written text could do to a whole society, to give a foretaste of the formative influence that the Bible was to have during the next 25 or more centuries. The Hebrew texts of Scripture were complete about five centuries before Christ, according to Orthodox Jewish tradition, although according to many critics, the last elements of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as major elements of Daniel, were composed much later, as late as the second century B.C.; conservative scholars dispute this late dating. The Greek-language books included in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox canon of the Old Testament, such as Maccabees, clearly date from second century before Christ.

A little book—assumed by many to have been the text of Deuteronomy, the "second" presentation of the Law—reformed a nation. The impact that one small portion of the Bible had on a little nation has been multiplied many times over by the impact the whole Book has had on 20-odd centuries of world history.

When King Josiah was 26 years old and began to repair the neglected Temple of Jerusalem—the northern Kingdom of Israel was already devastated by Assyria—Hilkiah the high priest reported to the scribe Shaphan, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord." Shaphan took it to the king and read it in his presence. "And it came about that when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes" (II Kings 22:7, 10-11). He tore his clothes and followed the tearing with a series of incisive moral and spiritual reforms.

Josiah was killed 13 years later in an ill-advised confrontation with an advancing Egyptian army. Soon all that had been accomplished in his reform was lost (II Kings 23:29); Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. According to Scripture, this was the consequence of trusting in military alliances rather than in the Word of the Lord. Israel came under foreign domination for most of the next 25 centuries.

After 70 years' exile in Babylon, the returning Jewish exiles were determined to be more attentive to the Book. A symbolic affirmation of this determination took place at the Water Gate of the partially rebuilt former Jewish capital. In what must have been an almost unique occasion in human history, the scribe Ezra read for the better part of seven days from the "book of the Law of Moses" to the people assembled at the gate. Because the text was in Hebrew, after being read from the book, it was translated for the people into Aramaic vernacular. In contrast to Josiah's reaction of dismay, the people responded to this affirmation of God's constant and reliable providence with rejoicing: this was the time of the reintroduction of the Feast of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:1-16). Echoes of Ezra's reading of the Law at the Water Gate were heard two millennia later, in the famous Senate Watergate hearings, when Presbyterian Senator Sam Ervin repeatedly quoted from that same book of law to the immense satisfaction of even the secular critics of Richard Nixon.

During almost two millennia of exile, dispersion, and foreign rule in Israel, from the subjugation of Jerusalem by Pompey the Great in 63 B.C. to the establishment of the modern state of Israel almost exactly 2,000 years later, the Hebrew Bible remained the enduring source of strength and unmovable reference point for the Jews. There is no parallel in all of history for a people so few in number and suffering so much adversity as the Jewish people preserving its identity through millennia. The only comparable story of national and cultural longevity is that of the Chinese, and they are by far the most numerous people on earth. The Hebrew language came to be largely confined to ritual purposes as long ago as the time of Ezra—which is why the readings at the Water Gate had to be interpreted, and why the Jews of Egypt translated the Scriptures into the Greek of the Septuagint. Nevertheless, the Book remained; the language was studied by the scholars, and learned in at least some fashion by the young. The variant of medieval German

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that became the language of most East European Jews, Yiddish, is written in Hebrew characters, and 26 centuries after Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem, the language of the Bible could once again become the language of a modern people. (Of course, the strictest Orthodox Jewish groups are reluctant to use Hebrew for any but religious purposes.)

If the Jews preserved their Bible, they also kept it to themselves. The New Testament was written in colloquial Greek, and when its authors quoted the Old, they generally used the current Greek translation, the Septuagint. By virtue of its availability in what was the most widely used language of the Roman Empire, the completed Christian Bible, the Old and New Testaments, became the founding document of a new culture. Pitirim Sorokin's work, *The Crisis of Our Age*, and my recent book, *The Sensate Culture*, both describe the sociocultural shift from the late, degenerate sensate culture of the pagan Greco-Roman world to the new ideational culture of early Christianity. This shift, which amounted to nothing less than the creation of a new or regenerated culture, of what we still call "Western civilization"—it is no accident that the current politically correct denigration of Western civilization has followed by only a few years the increasing Supreme Court-mandated exclusion of the Bible itself and the biblical heritage from the public arena—was not coordinated on a governmental level; in fact, it ran counter to the established principles of the central authority. Nevertheless, it spread with surprising uniformity across Europe and parts of Africa and West Asia, because it grew out of the message, the Christian Gospel, that remained coherent because it constantly referred back to the book, the Bible. The emerging Christian culture survived the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West and brought new societies into being in its place. The only competing power that could effectively challenge the Christian empire and its successor kingdoms was also a culture based on a book, namely, the Koran.

Although the Bible was not widely available until the invention of movable type in the 15th century, shortly before the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, its words permeated the society of the day, constantly repeated in the liturgy and portrayed in religious art. At least most of the clergy and the scholars of the day were well versed in major parts of its text. The Protestant Reformation was ignited by the Bible, which was just becoming widely available in printed versions, both in the original languages, in the Latin Vulgate, and in increasingly adequate vernacular translations. Erasmus of Rotterdam, no Protestant but a Christian humanist, edited the Greek text of the New Testament, and more and more Gentile scholars learned Hebrew.

Martin Luther's principles of the sufficiency and the perspicuity of Scripture, combined with the availability of Bibles, permitted the growth of a host of "theologians" of various stripes, ranging from the most reactionary and conservative to the most radical and fantastic. The eminent Reformation scholar Heiko Oberman, for example, sometimes speaks of the "Catholic Reformation and the Protestant Counter-Reformation," for Protestantism was to some extent a reaction back to Scriptural simplicity, as the Reformers saw it, against what they perceived to be Roman Catholic innovations. The overthrow of centralized papal authority in religious matters, together with the concept of private interpretation, led, as might have been predicted, to a host of changes. Private interpretation in the modern American Protestant sense has its origins in part in American democratic theory, and would have been as odious to Luther and Calvin as to their Roman Catholic adversaries. Even movements no longer regarded as Christian, such as Unitarianism, took their point of departure from the Bible, and repudiated the doctrine of the Trinity because they could not find it there. In more recent days, the Latter Day Saints, the Christian Scientists, and even the Jehovah's Witnesses, each of them differing in important points from traditional Christianity, argue on the basis of the Bible, supplemented, it is true, by additional claimed sources of inspiration. Nevertheless, despite the initial pandemonium, there remains a considerable core of unity among the Christian groups that adhere to the Bible. Conservative Roman Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox believers increasingly find that they have more in common with each other than with their coreligionists who no longer uphold the authority of the Bible. Among the Protestants, there is always some ebb and flow in doctrinal matters, with fundamentalists taking refuge in "Fundamentalists Anonymous," and former liberals becoming born again Bible-believers. The significant thing that must be noted is that Christians of varying pedigrees and tastes will keep returning to the same core Christian beliefs to the extent that they keep studying and believing the Bible.

The Bible, or more specifically, the desire to bring the English church clearly under biblical authority, ultimately produced a violent revolution under Oliver Cromwell, and while his Commonwealth was short-lived, British monarchs abandoned the idea of the divine right of kings. The American War of Independence was not clearly biblical in its inspiration, but biblical principles were important to many of the architects and the citizens of the new republic. Both elected officials and appointed justices continue to take an oath of office by swearing on the Bible, as do the witnesses being sworn in most courtrooms. American jurisprudence, following its English common law precedents, relied heavily on biblical insights and even biblical texts, until almost this very day. The massive abandonment of biblical and natural law principles that has occurred in the United States from the 1960's on followed rapidly upon the Supreme Court's ejection of prayer and Bible reading from the public schools. Although it would be too much to say that the Bible continued to be foundational for American political and legal thought until the last third of the 20th century, it is true that residual biblical principles formed a bulwark against radical changes in morals, and that the acceptance of abortion, no-fault divorce, condoms on demand, euthanasia, and gay rights came in like a flood once the Bible, prayer, and even the Decalogue were symbolically repudiated by our courts.

"Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Civ has got to go!" The battle-cry of Stanford University students, which alarmed so many traditionalists when it was shouted in the 1980's, was really superfluous. Once the Bible was banished to the remainder table of history, "Western Civ" was on its way out. But lest this essay end on too despairing a note, let the reader remember the words of Isaiah, quoted earlier: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." The Book may have been banished from the schools and the courtrooms, but it still exists in tens of millions of copies, and its message still burns in tens of millions of hearts. We may yet experience once more what an early Nonconformist preacher promised: "God has still more truth to break forth from His holy Word."

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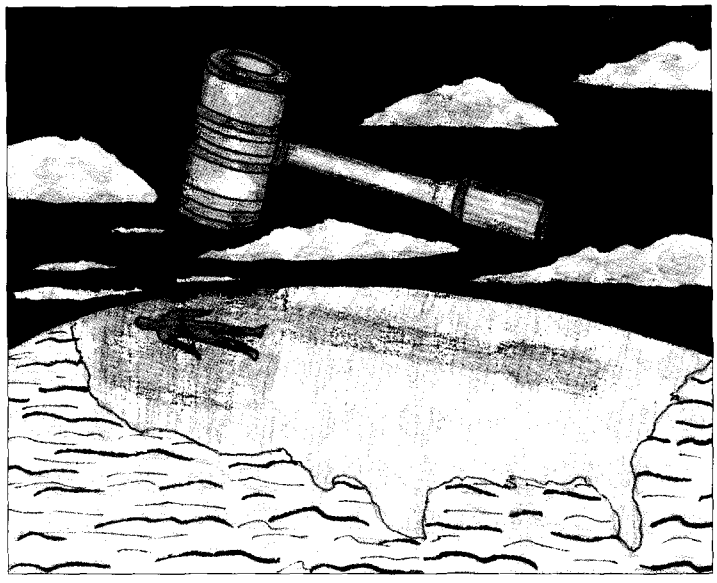
Rediscovering Philadelphia

by George W. Carey

"There is no liberty if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers."

—Montesquieu



Stephen Anderson

The Ninth Amendment and the Politics of Creative Jurisprudence: Disparaging the Fundamental Right of Popular Control
by Marshall L. DeRosa
New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers; 216 pp., $29.95

◆

The theme that unites the short, somewhat disparate eight chapters of this book is the use by the Supreme Court of unenumerated rights—that is, rights beyond those specifically enumerated in the Bill of Rights—to invalidate state laws. The result of this practice, as DeRosa emphasizes at various points, is that "popular control within the states" over matters of rights and even public policy has been diminished: the Court simply imposes its will, through the medium of unenumerated rights, upon the people of the 50 states. The two cases that most clearly illustrate this process, *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* (1965) and *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973), are among the most notorious in our constitutional history. From the "penumbras" formed by "emanations" of various specified rights, the Court discovered the unenumerated "right of privacy" (*Griswold*) that subsequently formed the basis for its invalidation of state anti-abortion laws (*Roe*).

The first chapter provides a summary view of DeRosa's concerns, while each of the subsequent chapters deals with various and more specific aspects of creative jurisprudence, unenumerated rights, and federalism. DeRosa emphasizes that the privileges and immunities clause of the Constitution was originally understood to allow the people of the states wide latitude to determine, either through their state constitutions or by statute, what the rights of state inhabitants would be. DeRosa later shows why the father and chief strategist of creative jurisprudence was Roscoe Pound, and sets forth two modern and contrasting views of unenumerated rights and the Constitution: the nomocratic understanding of M.E. Bradford, stressing the need for adherence to original intent and self-government and allowing only a very limited role to the judiciary, and Ronald Dworkin's rather open-ended "teleocratic" vision that would virtually give the Court unlimited power over the states (and everything else). Elsewhere DeRosa illustrates the more general reluctance of the federal courts to allow the state judiciaries autonomy or latitude in cases involving rights or claims thereto; he laments the Court's sanctioning of congressional gun-control policies, thereby leaving "a state's constitutional right of self-defense" to "the discretion of national electoral politics." In the very brief final chapter, he outlines a suggested constitutional change designed to restore "popular control and a viable American federalism," the two major "linchpins of the original American constitutional order": namely, whenever a majority of state "chief judicial officials" (one per state) declares a decision of the

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Supreme Court to be unconstitutional, that "decision shall thereby be negated and precedent restored."

A basic difficulty with DeRosa's thesis is that the Court's stance toward the Ninth Amendment and unenumerated rights is not at all clear. We do know that a majority of the Court has not, as yet, derived any unenumerated right from the Ninth Amendment, so that DeRosa's contention that the Court has shown a "willingness to write its understanding of unenumerated rights into the Ninth Amendment" is clearly an overstatement. Individual Justices, most notably Arthur Goldberg, have urged this course upon the Court—so far with no success. Likewise, the charge that the "Supreme Court has been incrementally constructing the Ninth Amendment into an instrument of rights nationalism" is an exaggeration. In fact, aside from the "right of privacy"—which is not derived from the Ninth Amendment—unenumerated rights have not played the major role that DeRosa ascribes to them.

Despite this, DeRosa's concerns regarding juridical imperialism are well taken. This imperialism, however, has come about almost entirely through the 14th Amendment and *enumerated* rights. Indeed, the Court can accomplish pretty much what it wants with enumerated rights alone, thereby obviating the need to recur to the Ninth Amendment. It can invent extraconstitutional concepts such as a "wall of separation," "compelling state interest," or "exclusionary rule" to expand or twist the meaning of enumerated rights; it can expand or contract "due process," "equal protection," or "liberty" to suit its fancy; and, if all else fails, it can resort to "substantive due process" or "substantive equal protection." Recourse to the Ninth Amendment would thus indicate a sterility of the imagination, an affliction extremely rare among judicial activists engaged in interpreting the Constitution.

DeRosa's analysis does help us to understand the erosion of the Philadelphia Constitution. It leads us to appreciate, for instance, that the intellectual heavyweights of the founding era were essentially correct when they argued that a Bill of Rights was both unnecessary and dangerous. As DeRosa points out, the Bill of Rights was intended to limit the powers of the national government, even though Madison (the so-called father of the Bill of Rights), being still in his nationalist phase, was not about to insert into it any of the things that hard-core Antifederalists really wanted, such as amendments that would substantially weaken the new national government. The main difficulty with a bill of rights, as Hamilton, Wilson, and Iredale, among others, pointed out, was that placing such limitations on the national government could give rise to the notion that government, rather than being one of the enumerated powers as designed, is one of the plenary or restricted powers. Madison made this point succinctly in the Virginia ratification debates when he rhetorically asked, "If an enumeration be made of our rights, will it not be implied that everything omitted is given to the national government?" The Ninth and Tenth amendments, thus, were clearly intended to plug the hole created by the limitations contained in the prior eight amendments; that is, they were to preserve the integrity of the original constitutional design of a national government possessing only enumerated powers.

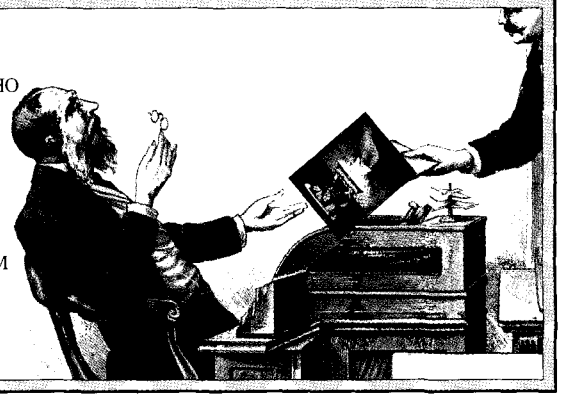
The reasons for the Ninth and Tenth amendments were well understood by constitutional scholars until relatively recent decades, when ideologically motivated law professors and judges, and misguided libertarians, displaying an embarrassing ignorance of our constitutional history, ripped the Ninth Amendment out of its constitutional context. If their view should prevail, and the Ninth Amendment become part of the "judicial arsenal," the results will even be more disastrous than DeRosa predicts. To be sure, the scope of state sovereignty will diminish even more, but new avenues for judicial tyranny will open up: the Court will be able to decree "constitutionally mandated" public policies more readily and with virtually no limitations, save those that a majority of the Justices might impose. Such a development, entailing the collapse of the separation of powers and the rule of law, would remove whatever doubts remain about the death of the Philadelphia Constitution.

In this regard, DeRosa's book points to two analytically separate problems. The more important one is judicial tyranny, whose source and sustenance is the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment. A secondary problem (though primary, it seems, for DeRosa) is that of preserving a viable federalism. But the kind of federal system DeRosa, Bradford, and others of similar persuasion want is impossible unless the judiciary, at all levels, can somehow be corralled. Suppose, for example, we manage to achieve an effective "judicial federalism" along the lines described by DeRosa, wherein the task of fixing the meaning and scope of rights falls to the state judiciaries. What is to guarantee that we would not eventually end up with 50 judicial tyrannies?

Here I do not mean to detract from the thrust of DeRosa's argument relative to the Court, rights, and federalism. His emphasis on the Court and on rights, not on Congress and the commerce powers, as the major cause of federalism's decline, is on the mark. Of course, Congress has abused its commerce powers. Yet these politically correctable abuses pale when set beside those of the Court. After all, Congress did not order busing, prohibit voluntary prayer in the schools, legalize abortion on demand, or cripple our system of criminal justice. And we would do well to remember this in our efforts to restore constitutionalism.

• READERS! •

IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS OR RELATIVES WHO MAY ENJOY *CHRONICLES*, PLEASE SEND US THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES. WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEND THEM A COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE!



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Indispensable Petrarch

by Thomas Fleming

Petrarch's *The Canzoniere, or Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*
Translated by Mark Musa
Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 754 pp., $59.95

◆

Old-fashioned English professors like to speak of "the Canon" in reverential tones, as if there were a list of great books as ancient as the Spartan king list and as hallowed as the *kyrie*. In fact, what they usually have in mind is a rummage sale assortment of a few really essential works jumbled together with many very good books and even more second-rate productions of the 19th century. Anglo-American literature, in general, does not rival the literatures of Greece and Rome, France and Italy, and—taken by itself—American culture cannot bear comparison with, say, its Irish and Polish rivals. The idea of Charles Dickens or Scott Fitzgerald—good writers though they be—as immortal classics is absurd enough to cast doubt on the entire conservative defense of the curriculum.

If we were to have a canon of European literature, it would consist, in its longer form, of the books embodying Arnold's criterion of "the best that has been thought and said," and of a shorter list of really essential books without which we could not be who we are—writers that established a genre or helped to define the sensibility of their own and succeeding ages. The criterion would require a simple test of the imagination: if all the works of Plato or Vergil were destroyed, could we reconstruct some sense of what they wrote from the literature of succeeding generations? Or, put negatively, if we had to extract all traces of Plato and Vergil from Western literature, the devastation would be unbearable: Ariosto, Tasso, Milton, Spenser would be mutilated beyond repair, once the Vergilian influences were removed, and the entire European tradition of philosophy, in the absence of the Platonist (and Aristotelian) traditions, would be reduced to a set of cranks and cracker-barrel amateurs.

Of the ancients, Homer obviously belongs on such a list, as do Ovid and Cicero and probably Seneca and Augustine. Of more recent writers, Dante certainly qualifies and probably Shakespeare. Perhaps Cervantes belongs, and—I should like to think—Goethe. If we proceed too far, we begin to run into national prejudices and questions of taste, but in any canon, no matter how short, there would be room for Francesco Petrarch.

The first of the great Italian humanists, Petrarch restored the dignity of the Latin tongue and inaugurated the search for manuscripts of lost ancient works; he used Latin for his voluminous correspondence, for his failed epic *Africa*, and for the prose essays that largely made his reputation; as a patriotic Italian, he campaigned unceasingly for the return of the Pope—and the Emperor—to Rome and was the advisor of princes, Popes, and kings. As a poet, he took up where his Tuscan predecessors left off and established a dialect and style that have dominated Italian poetry down to our own day, and, in his sonnets, he gave shape to literary forms and conventions without which English and French verse would be unimaginable.

There are certain writers—not all of them great by any means—who leave an indelible impression of their humanity upon the reader. I think of Cicero and Augustine (both of whom impressed themselves upon Petrarch), of Samuel Johnson and good old Thomas Browne. Petrarch, who is another, was the first man since the fall of Rome to leave a multidimensional record of his life, in his poems, his essays, his addresses, and—above all—in the letters that he scrupulously collected.

In his own day, Petrarch was perhaps best known for his Latin essays and verse, but to subsequent generations he is familiar as the young man who fell in love with a girl he immortalized as Laura—a name that allowed him an almost infinite number of puns. Petrarch's sonnets and *canzoni*, although they have inspired beautiful imitations in English, have rarely been well translated. The lovely sweetness of the Italian line is almost impossible to convey in English, and in Italian verse it is possible to say quite ordinary things that have the music of Monteverdi or Bellini. Even a decidedly third-rate poet like Lorenzo da Ponte was the perfect match for Mozart in three of his greatest operas. (When he was not chasing women or working a con, Da Ponte was a footsore apostle of Italian verse, preaching to the heathens in Austria, England, and America.)

Since no Italian poet, not even Leopardi, is more musical than Petrarch or more elusive to the translator, Mark Musa, in editing and translating Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, has performed a wonderful service to the English-speaking reader. Here, in one volume, are included the poet's own selection of the best lyric verse he wrote throughout his life, accompanied by brief but useful notes (at the end of the volume, where they belong) and by blank-verse translations that are straightforward (if not always quite literal) and dignified. No effort is made either to show off or to intrude 20th-century sensibilities—a practice increasingly common by poets walking—or rather schlepping—in the footsteps of Ezra Pound with this essential difference: Pound was an authentic poet and an amateur scholar. He was deliberately sloppy in his versions from the Provençal or the Latin, but he knew, in his own chaotic way, several Romance languages. His successors are as incompetent to read Latin and Italian as they are to write English verse.

I do not pretend to have worked through every poem and translation in this 800-page volume: poets (and translators) deserve better treatment than a mechanical regimen of 40-50 pages an hour, and read at the proper pace, this volume will occupy hundreds of hours. And, while I am confessing, I should admit that I am less familiar with Petrarch's Italian than with his Latin works, which I read so many years ago with Douglas Thompson, a fine scholar who soon discovered how woefully unprepared I was.

Petrarch was a friend of the Sienese painter Simone Martini, and his early poems are splashed in the bright colors

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of 15th- and 16th-century painting. Here is Laura in the early days:

Green clothes, bright red or dark
purple ones
no lady ever wore
or hair of gold has twisted in
blond braid.

Here she is again, years after her death, revived in memory:

The aura [l'aura=breeze=Laura]
sighing gently as it moves
the verdant laurel and her
golden hair,
turns, with its aspects new
and delicate,
souls into pilgrims wandering from
their bodies.
Whiteness of rose born high
among hard thorns,
when will the world find one like
her again?

Petrarch was no mere amatory poet (like, for example, Tibullus); love was, indeed, his principal but not his only theme, and the *Canzoniere* has poems on politics, the state of the church, and the future of Italy. In *Italia mia* he sounded the note of Italian nationalism that will be heard in great Italian poets of nearly every generation. The loveliest land on earth, the home of immortal soldiers and poets, had been turned into a battleground by warring princes who hired foreign mercenaries:

Nature provided well for our condition when she raised up the screen
of Alps between us and the German rage; but blind desire fighting
its own good then managed to
contrive a way to make this healthy
body sick.

I wonder how many Italians remembered Petrarch, when Mussolini's signature on the Pact of Steel drew German troops into their "sweet countryside."

By far the greater part of the *Canzoniere*, however, is devoted to his unconsummated love for Laura. But for Petrarch, love was closer to Christian *caritas* than to sexual desire, and even before her death his love poems take on an increasingly mystical significance. In dreams he sees her as she was when first they met and awakes to the banal reality that "in thirteen forty eight, / at hour one of the sixth day of April, / that soul now blest departed from its body." He now painfully acknowledges that she was right to deny him what he most wanted, and in vision after vision he sees Laura enthroned in heaven, like some beautiful pagan taken up to Olympus. Eventually he learns to see beyond her physical beauty into a spiritual purity he had been almost blind to, in his infatuation, and in the end, the last *canzone* is a hymn to the Virgin, who now assumes all the attributes of the beloved. Macaulay (perhaps not the best judge) thought it the most beautiful of hymns. In this carefully wrought masterpiece, the poet who had struggled with his own ambition and worldliness finally realizes that he cannot succeed unaided:

Virgin, in whom I place all of
my hope
you can and will help me in my
great need:
do not abandon me at
the last pass,
not for my sake but His who made
me man,
let not my own worth but His own
high likeness
in me move you to care for one so
low.
Medusa and my sin turned me to
stone
dripping useless moisture.
Virgin, now with repentant
and holy tears fill up my weary
heart;
at least let my last weeping be
devout, without mud of earth,
as was the first and insane vow
of mine.

Petrarch's life was an allegory of love, and in the end he found peace, the last word of his *Canzoniere*.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

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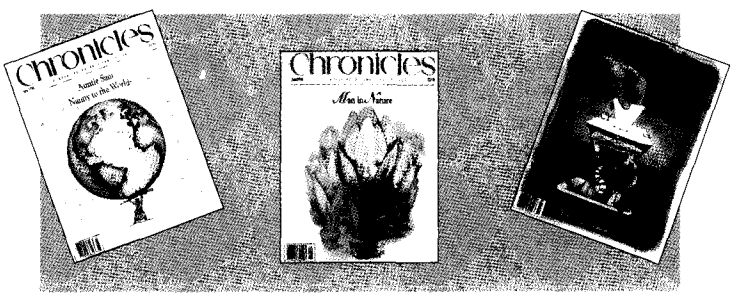

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Science on Parade

by John Caiazza

The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark
by Carl Sagan
New York: Random House;
457 pp., $25.95

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In this large and well-padded book, Carl Sagan promotes a vulgar scientism: the notion that science and its method provide the solutions to virtually all human problems and serve as the ultimate guide for human behavior. Sagan's scientific method serves as a kind of "baloney detector" by which to detect the fraudulent, the self-serving, the power-mad, the superstitious, and the fictitious. He puts virtually everything except science in these categories, including statements by politicians, UFO abduction stories, New Age enthusiasms, and the idea of reincarnation. However, Sagan himself has demons that escape his scrutiny, including his left-wing political convictions (evident throughout the book), the belief in ex-

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traterrestrial intelligence, and the notorious nuclear winter scare of a few years back. Sagan also includes religion—especially Christianity—which he smears rather than attacks by a clever method of guilt-by-association. His discussion of religion is immediately linked to the witch-hunting craze of the 16th century, on which he spends a significant part of his book. He describes the methods of torture and the interrogation process, and quotes from Catholic and Protestant authorities. Sagan's devotion to the poor witches, some of whom like Joan of Arc were burned at the stake, is remarkable. But are there no examples of cruelty in the 20th century for Sagan to write about at such length and in such detail? Sagan's attacks on religion, which might have been written by Mark Twain, Tom Paine, or Robert Ingersoll, are pervaded by the musty odor of 18th- and 19th-century atheism.

These men, however, wrote far more intelligently and forthrightly than Sagan, who has dramatized his own scientism in a PBS series which dumbed down astronomical science to the point that the only memorable phrase from it is "billions and billions." Sagan skates on the surface of significant issues, glibly reducing the anxieties of the human heart to hormonal imbalances, mankind's search for transcendence to a remembrance of childhood fears, and the conflict between faith and reason to a sort of intellectual wrestling match between "science" and "anti-science." But even on this vulgar level, too much has happened in the 20th century for Sagan's scientific triumphalism to be credible, so that inconvenient facts are either mentioned only in passing or not mentioned at all. For example, Sagan's treatment of Einstein's Theory of Relativity neglects to mention that the chief proponent of the absoluteness of time and space was not some Medieval monk but Isaac Newton, and that it was not Edward Teller (who appears to be one of Sagan's chief demons) but President Eisenhower who was responsible for removing Robert Oppenheimer as an advisor on atomic policy to the federal government.

In the end, Sagan is promoting a meretricious account of science that is more a schoolboy history of the world than it is a defense and justification of scientific discipline.

John Caiazza writes from Medford, Massachusetts.

The Story of Love

by William Mills

The Double Flame: Love and Eroticism
by Octavio Paz
New York: Harcourt Brace; 276 pp., $22.00

◆

Octavio Paz, who was 82 when he wrote this book, asks in his preface, "Wasn't it a little ridiculous, at the end of my days, to write a book about love?" The answer is a resounding "no." The text is densely rich with ideas, elegant in style, and the ruminations are very wise. Paz ends the short preface noting, "The original, primordial fire, sexuality, raises the red flame of eroticism, and this in turn raises and feeds another flame, tremulous and blue: the flame of love." His endeavor in *The Double Flame* is one of differentiation, and amplification.

Animals always copulate in the same way, whereas humans, though copulating, transform the act into something else besides. This transformation is effected through invention, variation, the imagination. Eroticism is exclusively human, which reflects another difference between our species and other animals: an insatiable sexual thirst. We do not have periods of rut followed by sexual dormancy. We are the only living creatures without an automatic regulator (although I might suggest investigators consider the headache or prolonged television watching). The insatiability of human sexual desire has its bad as well as its good aspects, since, while it leads to procreation and to the continuation of the species and society, it is also highly subversive in its effects. "It ignores classes and hierarchies, arts and sciences, day and night. . . . It is a volcano and any one of its eruptions can bury society under a violent flow of blood." Every society has prohibitions regulating the sexual instinct. "Without them the family would disintegrate and with it all of society. The human race, subjected to the perpetual electrical discharge of sex, has in-

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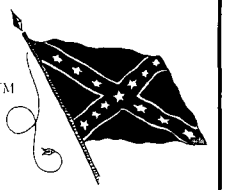

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vented a lightning rod: eroticism."

In distinguishing eroticism and love, Paz begins with the story of Eros and Psyche from Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* (or *Metamorphoses*). Eros, a cruel divinity, falls in love with a mortal, Psyche, who returns his love. The figure of Psyche is a Platonic echo, but as Paz observes, "an unexpected transformation of Platonism." No mere object of contemplation on some ladder that leads to the idea of love or beauty, love here becomes a love story: Eros falls in love not only with a sensual mortal, but with her soul. This story, Paz believes, anticipates the distinction between love and eroticism 1,000 years later in Provence, and it is this vision that leads to our modern view of love. He makes numerous distinctions, for example, between love as Plato understood it ("a solitary adventure"), love as the East understands it within the context of its religions, and love as it is experienced among the moderns.

For the West, at least since the advent of courtly love in Provence, the image of love can be reduced to three elements: *exclusivity*, or love for only one person; *attraction*, or one's fate freely accepted; the *person*, who is a soul and a body. These elements are interrelated, interdependent, and not infrequently war among themselves. In an erotic relationship, the partner may appropriately be called an object, and the object or partner is simply interchangeable with another. Love is for one person, and this personhood is complex. In order for the attraction to be freely accepted, the loved one must be free to reciprocate. A thousand years after *The Golden Ass* the status of women had changed, and two of the circumstances that influenced this change were Christianity (which endowed women with a dignity unknown in paganism) and the Germanic heritage (wherein women were freer than in the Roman one).

But personhood was profoundly dependent upon the proposition that human beings have souls. When one loved a body one loved a soul, but a soul incarnated within a body. This notion of personhood derives from Greek philosophy, and from Christianity. Paz claims that our era's rejection of the soul "has been the principal reason for the political disasters of the 20th century and of the general debasement of our civilization."

As recent science has virtually been forced to become philosophical, it has taken up the old problem of the relation of the mind to the body. Paz is optimistic about the possibilities—especially for the new science of the mind—since many of the current models are not merely mechanistic ones. But he believes that we are urgently in need of a Kant to perform a critique of scientific reason, which would allow "the dialogue between science, philosophy, and poetry [to] be the prelude to the reconstitution of the unity of culture. The prelude, as well, of the resurrection of the human person, who has been the cornerstone and wellspring of our civilization."

William Mills is a novelist and poet whose latest work of fiction is Properties of Blood.

Hard Lives, Hard Times

by Gregory McNamee

The Last Ranch: A Colorado Community and the Coming Desert
by Sam Bingham
New York: Pantheon; 384 pp., $27.50

◆

The life of country people, the Kentucky poet-farmer Wendell Berry has observed, is marked by a surprising complexity. To be successful it requires deep knowledge of the land, of the seasons in their time, of plants and animals—to say nothing of markets, freight costs, and federal regulations. Plant early, and risk late frost; plant late, and risk summer flooding. Calve early, and risk the high mortality rate winter brings; calve late, and risk the infectious diseases the warm air carries. Make the wrong guesses and face foreclosure, battle the elements and hope for the best: each day brings a new challenge to the farmer, the rancher, the orchardkeeper.

For the country people who populate Sam Bingham's *The Last Ranch*, the complexities are constant, even in the quiet times. "The learning," he writes, "all seems so simple in the middle of winter. You get good stock. Train a sheepdog. Lay off the coyotes. Lay the hay in this new way. Your land improves. Your margin improves. A few new techniques and you gain a stride or two. . . . You learn to beat the system. But of course, this is only February, agricultural dreamtime, when everything seems possible, predictable, and even mechanical. Inevitably the season will turn." Turn it will, to summers of beleaguered herds, unpredictable rains, the occasional twister, and always the vagaries of the beef market; one complicated matter unfolding into another.

Bingham's ranchers dwell in the high desert off the Gun Sight Road in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado, gypsum and snow country. Theirs is not good land. The soil in the northern section of the valley is coarse, sandy, hostile to cultivation; heavily ranched since the 1840's, it is now all but denuded of native vegetation. "The rich mix of grass species that had flourished in Saguache County at the turn of the century had changed," Bingham writes. "Artesian wells that once shot 20 feet in the air now required pumping. Chico brush grew where old-timers once grew hay, and here and there bare alkali ground outcropped as hard as cement." The southern section of the valley is no better, but there industrialized agriculture has made a stand against the ever-encroaching desert; the area is the site of one of the world's heaviest concentrations of center-pivot sprinklers, irrigating thousands of quarter-mile circles of potatoes, carrots, lettuce, alfalfa, and malting barley, pumping fossilized water millions of years old to bring profit for yet another season.

But overgrazing and exotic agriculture have ruined the land; land that is marginal to begin with, and that will not easily recover from the hard use humans have put it to. In Bingham's account the condition of the San Luis Valley is scarcely different from that of drought-stricken Africa. The African drylands, now a theater of famine, make news where ours do not because, he suggests, American media coverage of purely agricultural issues is so poor and because other sources of income—the occasional oil royalties, light industry, various kinds of federal welfare, and always the beckoning cities just over the horizon—keep the people of San Luis from starving.

"Ecologically speaking," Bingham writes, "the semi-arid region along the Rio Grande in the United States has come strongly to resemble the Sahel, in spite of a small rural population, relatively little livestock, private ownership, and

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no end of education, technology, and capital." No place in Chad or Niger, he continues, is much more barren than the Rio Puerco Valley west of Albuquerque, which a century ago was covered in grass so high that a mounted rider could not see over it. "In significant ways," he continues, "rural Colorado has more in common with rural Burkina Faso than with Denver, which in turn shares more with Ouagadougou than with the principal town of Saguache County."

The problem is not the San Luis Valley's alone; more than 10 percent of the earth's surface is now desert or dryland vulnerable to desertification. But it must seem to those who live in southern Colorado, where the quality of productive land is rapidly deteriorating, that the possibilities of making a life there are dwindling with every advance of the desert. To combat its spread, San Luis Valley residents are eagerly seeking remedies, even grasping at straws. An especially attractive one is South African ecologist Allan Savory's theory that cattle grazing, no matter in what number, improves the health of rangeland, an argument, Bingham notes, that falls into the "curious category of counterintuitive propositions that contradict all evidence and common sense as the situation appears but might change the situation if you dared apply them." Savory's theory—and Bingham does not do enough to discuss its obvious flaws—makes sense if applied to truly nomadic herds that graze an area, no matter how heavily, and then move on; not to land grazed again and again without being allowed to regenerate fully.

Seek as they may, the people of the San Luis Valley have found no immediate answers to their problems. They are fully aware that their land is fast approaching ruin; as Bingham says, "They knew the range had limits and at the end of the day accepted responsibility for them." By showing their quest for solutions, Bingham does much to exonerate rural people, who are often depicted in the environmental literature as simpletons out for a quick buck no matter what the cost to the land. (To be sure, they seek the work where it comes, riding the waves of the global market as best they can; the last big paycheck for some residents of the San Luis Valley came from Iraq, whose government bought up local wool with which to make uniforms so that its soldiers could go off to the cold mountains to fight Kurdish rebels.)

This is a rare and beautifully written book about hard lives in agriculturally hard times. Bingham shuns the temptation to oversimplify and to offer the too-ready prescriptions of urban people for rural troubles. He instead explains complexities that city dwellers can only begin to guess at, limning the staggering problems that threaten to overwhelm those who produce food in the Sahelian margins of the American Southwest, "where the desert bares its teeth at our fabulous global economy."

Gregory McNamee's most recent book is The Sierra Club Desert Reader.

Brief Mentions

Keeping Together in Time. *By William H. McNeill (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 198 pp., $22.00*

Although it may seem useless in an age of computerized war, rhythmic marching was once as revolutionary as the Stealth bomber is in our own day. One of the oldest military practices in recorded history, it was long a crucial aspect of war in both the West and the East. Among the illustrations William H. McNeill offers is a picture of the Stele of the Vultures, a stone carving from the third millennium B.C. which depicts Eannatum of Lagash leading rows of troops in a siege of the city of Umma. Although such tactics grew popular in ancient Mesopotamia and Sumer, and Greek and Roman armies later adopted them, they eventually fell into disuse thanks to the advent of archery, which made it unwise for soldiers to form tight groups. A different kind of close-order drill caught on in the 16th century, thanks to the Dutch general Maurice of Orange. Like Carl J. Richard in *The Founders and the Classics*, McNeill shows us how far the influence of classical authors transcended their time and place. Inspired by the writings of Aelianus and Vegetius, Maurice trained his riflemen to load, aim, and fire their guns in unison, and his pikemen to swing their halberds according to a rhythm. Such tactics were unfamiliar, but lengthy training "made the necessary motions almost automatic and less likely to be disrupted by stress of battle." Under Maurice's command, formations of Dutch arquebusiers and pikemen—fired by the passions arising from prolonged rhythmic motion—won victories over seasoned Spanish forces who had defeated the French in Italy. The Spanish themselves adopted close-order drill after suffering a defeat at Rocroi in 1643 at the hands of French officers who had studied Maurice's tactics. When Maurice's orders were recorded by the talented engraver Jacob de Gheyn, who produced a book containing, on each page, a simple command and a corresponding picture, Maurice's methods became famous all over Europe, and soon Russian, Italian, and German officers were training their men in close-order drill. Using tactics akin to Maurice's, Chinese armies succeeded in subduing the nomads of the East Asian steppe, thereby "ma[king] China what it is today, the world's only surviving imperial state." Why were these simple tactics so effective wherever they were applied? Among the psychological uses of "keeping together in time," McNeill says, was to whip up furies that made it easier to do difficult and risky things, like engaging enemy troops. (In a chapter on religious sects, McNeill points to the use of mass dances to achieve a state of euphoria.) McNeill does not claim to offer a thorough history of mass rhythmic movement, but only a treatise aimed at inspiring others to study this phenomenon.

—Michael Washburn

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by Samuel Francis

Conspiracy

History, wrote Voltaire, is the sound of wooden shoes running up the backstairs and of silken slippers running down—a remark that implies that the real story of high politics is never what we are able to see but always a tale hidden from public view. Since he lived in an age of despots, enlightened and otherwise, and was on intimate terms with several of them, Voltaire was in a good position to know, and it's doubtful, if he were alive today in the age of such despots as a Free Press and Open Government, that he would be any more convinced that what he saw was really what was going on inside the dark corridors of power. Indeed, in the last few years, for all the disclosure laws enacted and all the ethics codes by which politicians and the press claim to abide, an ever-growing number of Americans seems to believe that conspiracies are firmly in the saddle and that the saddle is firmly buckled on their own backs.

The Clinton era has encouraged this belief, and probably not since the mysteries of Pearl Harbor and communist espionage in the Roosevelt administration has the American presidency been as engulfed in distrust and suspicion as it is today. Whitewater, Travelgate, a steamy labyrinth of sexual escapades, and the death of Vince Foster are only the icing on the conspiratorial cake. There are also the Waco massacre, the apparent coverup in the Ruby Ridge bloodletting, various anomalies in the Oklahoma City bombing and its investigation, a plethora of stories about drug smuggling out of Mena, Arkansas, and a jungle of questions about such issues as NAFTA, the Mexican bailout, and the New World Order. These are merely the reasonable and important subjects of conspiracy speculation. More recently, there are new theories about the strange but timely demises of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, ex-CIA Director William Colby, and Admiral Jeremy Boorda. Then there are the wilder shores that dredge up black helicopters, golden fringe around the flag, microchip implants, and new designs for American currency. Finally, the theories lurch unsteadily into the sweaty underbrush of madness, where the fantastic fictions of the *X-Files* take tea with platter-eyed UFO aliens and the Elders of Zion. And these are simply the conspiracy theories favored by the right. On the left, one enters yet another hall of mirrors where the reflections of reality are even more grotesque.

Whatever else conspiracy theories prove, their prevalence at certain periods of history invariably shows the impending collapse of public trust in the way things are, a readiness to ascribe to the occupants of a society's most visible and respected positions of leadership the most villainous purposes and the most ruthless means of attaining them. It is no accident that most of the major revolutionary movements in modern history have wrapped themselves in conspiracy theories or that, when such movements have been successful, a good part of the populace embraced their ideas. Nor is it an accident that in our own day such potentially revolutionary forces as the citizens' militias and similar Middle American Radical movements are among the main purveyors of conspiracy theories. And yet, for all their flaws—the absence of reliable evidence, the distraction from issues of more substance that they induce, and the delusion of an invincible enemy that they spawn—conspiracy theories point to larger and more important truths than those who weave them usually seem to realize.

A simple legal definition of conspiracy is that it is an agreement among two or more parties to commit some illegal act, but in the larger sense of the word "conspiracy," the element of illegality is not necessary. What is necessary is the element of secrecy, and in the sense of an agreement among two or more parties to undertake some common action for a secret or undisclosed end or by secret or undisclosed means, it ought to be obvious that human beings do little else but conspire throughout their entire lives. One plans to get married, to have children, to pursue a particular career, to promote a particular business transaction, to run for office, or to adopt a certain policy toward the Third World, and each and every one of these courses of action, insofar as it is undertaken in concert with other participants and insofar as the participants do not disclose their plans before it is convenient to do so, constitutes a conspiracy. The collaboration involved in them and the degree of secrecy that attends them are not different in kind from those involved in planning a revolution, an assassination, or a long-term subterfuge by which a close and cryptic oligarchy takes over the government of a republic. Not only do politicians, bankers, priests, Freemasons, Jews, and intelligence agencies conspire, so does everyone else. The main difference between the undisclosed plots and plans of the principals of the most popular and perennial conspiracy theories and those of everyone else is that nobody much cares about Aunt Gertrude's conspiracy with her bridge club to arrange the marriage of her nephew, or Mr. Podsnip's conspiracy with his business partners to build more parking lots. But whether we are engaged in designing One World Government or new drapes for the upstairs guest room, all of us are neck-deep in conspiracies of one kind or another most of the time.

Until the blessings of modern government and journalism were inflicted upon us, this was obviously true of political affairs. The kings and even the republics of Voltaire's age did not spend a great deal of energy informing their subjects and citizens of what they were doing or why they were doing it. To most of the literate public of premodern Europe, what went on in the councils of state or even in those parliamentary assemblies that existed was obscure, and to the far larger nonliterate public it was totally invisible. The elementary facts of history that any college survey text recounts about the age of Louis XIV or Charles I were unknown to most of their contemporaries, and even well-informed public servants like Samuel Pepys in late-17th century England entertained only the foggiest ideas about what his government was really doing. It is not inaccurate to describe conspiracy as the normal mode of government throughout most of human history, and even today we learn what really went on in a particular administration, war, or congressional battle only after a generation or so of the most intense investigation by participants, journalists, and historians.

Of course, to say that conspiracy is a

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normal and regular mode of conduct for human beings does not mean that all conspiracy theories are true. The late Murray Rothbard, with his usual clearheadedness, pointed to two abiding flaws of conspiracy theories in an article published in *Reason* magazine in 1977. One flaw is that simply showing that an event benefited a particular party (the *cui bono* argument) does not prove that that party was behind the event; you have to produce empirical evidence of the party's causal role in bringing the event about. The other and more serious flaw is that conspiracy theorists have an irrepressible habit of piling their theories together to formulate what might be called the Unified Field Theory of History. "The bad conspiracy analyst," Murray wrote, seems to have a compulsion to wrap up all the conspiracies, all the bad guy power blocs, into one giant conspiracy. Instead of seeing that there are several blocs trying to gain control of government, sometimes in conflict and sometimes in alliance, he has to assume—again without evidence—that a small group of men controls them all, and only seems to send them into conflict.

Rothbard's concept of "power blocs" points to a key distinction between vulgar conspiracy theory and the more sophisticated analysis of power relationships that he advocated and practiced. A "power bloc" in Rothbard's sense is very similar to what the Italian elite theorist Gaetano Mosca called a "political force." In Mosca's view, human societies are composed of contending political forces that seek power, and these forces include all groups able to organize and mobilize considerable numbers of people and resources around them. In the late Roman Empire, Christianity and (for a time) Mithraism were such forces, able to attract a large following and to compete for power in the crumbling imperial state. In other periods of history, significant political forces have mobilized around certain military technologies or forms of organization (the Greek phalanx or Roman legion, the mounted warriors and English longbows of the Middle Ages), or economic interests (industrial wealth in the early 19th century). What may be a significant political force, one able to win the support of followers and adherents and exercise power in one historical epoch or circumstance, may cease to be significant when other forces are able to resist, overcome, or replace it. Those political forces or power blocs that are most successful in mobilizing power then constitute an elite or ruling class.

Power blocs contend through conspiratorial means, sometimes, as Rothbard notes, in conflict and sometimes in alliance, but what is important to understand about the art and science of conspiracy is that conspiracies on a large scale are never successful unless they are backed by forces that are historically significant, by forces able to mobilize followers and resources effectively. James Burnham in *Suicide of the West* pointed to this truth in a comment on the "revisionist" theories of the left and right about conspiratorial shenanigans to bring the United States into the two world wars:

> Both sets of revisionists are unwilling to recognize that those plots could succeed only because the United States was indissolubly linked by economic, fiscal, technological and strategic chains [i.e., historically significant political forces] to those wars from their beginnings and from before they began. There were just as many plots to keep the nation out of war as there were to get it in. The revisionists never explain why the pro-war plotting succeeded but the anti-war plotting so palpably failed.

This is why in this century the conspiracies of the left have been largely successful while those of the right have largely fizzled. The left, mobilized around and expressing the political force of modern managerial groups relying on the techniques of management to organize mass society, has represented a rising social and political force; the right, expressing the political force of social and economic elites that have been in protracted decline since the late 19th century, does not. Hence, groups beloved of right-wing conspiracy theorists like the Council on Foreign Relations or the Trilateral Commission are far more successful in implementing their rather discreet plans and agendas than their equally discreet counterparts on the right. The CFR and the Commission, of course, no more control American government and society than the aristocratic clubs of London controlled Great Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries. Like the clubs, the Council and the Commission are merely formal organizational expressions of the elites that actually run things.

The problem with this concept of conspiracy as "power bloc" or "political force" is that it tends to take all the fun out of conspiracy theory. Instead of locating villainy in a small, monolithic, invisible, and all but invincible band of plotters, it offers a sociology of elites as the main explanation of the dominant historical trends of the age. But truth, if it is less fun than fiction, is at least more useful. The power bloc model ought to dispose of several of the wackier conspiracy theories without further discussion. We are not talking about Freemasons or Illuminati or Satanists or rabbis who pore over the Talmud in a millennium-long quest to make us believe in evolution, but about which groups control the instruments of political, economic, and cultural power and how they organize and use their power.

And, if the power bloc model immediately disposes of various useless and untrue "theories" of conspiracy, it also helps point us in the right direction in thinking about what the real problems of the distribution—and redistribution—of power are. For all the obnoxiousness, repulsiveness, and outright crookedness of the Clinton administration, Mr. Clinton and his wife are not the real problems imagined by those who spend their waking hours exploring the sinister conspiracies in which the First Couple and their cronies are supposedly involved. What matters—if not for the Republican Party, then at least for a serious Middle American radicalism that seeks to challenge the dominant power blocs of the country and to develop itself as a voice for a new power bloc—is not who, if anybody, murdered Vince Foster or how Hillary made her millions, but how this administration and any Republican or Democratic administration likely to replace it reflect the same structure of power that has prevailed since at least the New Deal. Once Middle Americans begin to grasp the truth that it is the power structure rather than a man, a woman, or a small gang of swindlers and sex fiends that lies behind the dispossession of their country and their cultural and economic destruction, then they will begin to understand that what really goes on behind the scenes is far deeper, far more alarming, and far more radicalizing than any tales of silken slippers running down Mr. Clinton's backstairs.

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Letter From Australia

by R.J. Stove

Geoffrey Blainey and the Multicultural Nirvana

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One's kindest possible response to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's typical attempt at a sitcom is Mark Twain's quip about *The Vicar of Wakefield*: "Nothing could be funnier than its pathos, and nothing could be sadder than its humour." Hence the astonished pleasure inspired by the Corporation's dazzling new comedy *Frontline*. A merciless skewering of current-affairs talking heads' moral pretensions, *Frontline* initially leaves viewers laughing hard enough to incur hernias, and afterward leaves them awestruck at its parodistic brilliance. Its second series contained the show's most horridly acute episode yet: a chilling tale about a harmless and mild-mannered professor who has had the impudence to publish a statistical survey of ethnic groups in Australia. His volume is of the driest, least controversial and—one would have hoped—most innocuous sort; but just because it touches, however soporifically, upon race, the *Frontline* motormouths are convinced that its author is a racist. (As Sam, the show's executive producer put it: "Can you find out whether he's got any right-wing affiliations—political, social. . . . Does he like Wagner. . . . Are his parents German?") The climax comes with *Frontline*'s anchorman Mike Moore perfecting his Vyshinsky imitation, at the hapless academic's expense, on prime-time TV:

MIKE: Welcome back. Our nation has been rocked over recent days by the release of a book that some are calling a Third Reich-type document. Entitled *Above Average*, it threatens to tear this country's social fabric apart. It was written by controversial professor Desmond Lowe, and he joins me now. Thanks for coming on.

PROF: Thank you. I certainly didn't set out to be controversial. . . . My point was to identify prevalence and frequency on a wide range of criteria. It's not a static commentary of predetermination or causal relationships.

MIKE (not grasping this): Sure. I mean, that's obvious. But you mention race.

PROF: Yes . . .

MIKE: You attribute characteristics on the basis of race.

PROF: Statistical characteristics.

MIKE (interrupting): That's racism.

PROF: No.

MIKE: You said it.

PROF: But I . . . It was . . .

MIKE (aggressively): You said it, professor. That's racism. [Cut back to control room.]

SAM (impressed): Wow, Mike. [Cut back to studio.]

PROF: I was pointing to elements that can be altered.

MIKE: Social engineering—isn't that what Hitler did?

PROF: No, no. That's not social engineering.

MIKE: You're an apologist for Hitler.

PROF: I'm referring to my book.

MIKE: So I guess you would deny the holocaust, yes?

Every *Frontline* addict with an IQ of more than single figures knew at once whom the scriptwriters had in mind when creating the professor: Geoffrey Blainey, Australia's finest and most maligned historian. Blainey's publications (unlike those of Moore's victim) could never be called dry, much less soporific. There, however, the list of differences between him and his fictional counterpart ends.

Five years back, any ABC program which suggested even by implication that Blainey's existence might be defensible in the cosmic scheme of things, let alone that his cogent and dignified criticisms of unrestricted immigration might deserve study, would never have gone to air. These days—though, of course, almost no one in Australian public life has been so hubristic as to suggest that there was anything actually wrong with howling down Blainey in the 1980's—his former attackers tend to be strangely mute. Insofar as Australia's We Hate Blainey Movement continues to function, most of its members come from the mass media's more overtly putrescent elements: from the Mike Moore intellectual stratum, in short. A decade ago the movement attracted, shall we say, a better class of thug: any Sydney or Melbourne lecturer who couldn't attract an ululating rent-a-mob to hear his curses of Blainey The Racist (curses no less sincere for being ritualistic) wasn't even trying. That heady era has long since ended. Where once total certitude as to Blainey's unfitness for human society reigned amid the chattering classes, there is gradually appearing an intimation of sheepish acknowledgment that in certain areas of unambiguous fact he was right and his critics wrong. His last and best book, *A Shorter History of Australia*, has earned reviews so respectful that for all their accuracy they make one's head swim. Can this man, praised on all sides as a genius of his exacting craft, be the Geoffrey Blainey whom these selfsame journals once spoke of in terms that would prematurely whiten Ice-T's hair?

For Blainey the trouble began in 1984, when he gave a Rotary speech at the town of Warrnambool, 250 kilometers southwest of Melbourne. Before that, he had been widely regarded as a figure with, if not mildly leftist sympathies, then at least a conspicuous absence of what in Australia's debauched lexical currency get called "conservative" ones. In 1973, Gough Whitlam had been eager enough to name the 43-year-old

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Blainey as the first Literature Board Chairman of the Australia Council, which was and is this country's main arts-funding government department. Nothing in Blainey's public remarks then, or later, suggested that the Whitlam regime regretted its choice of chairman. Still, about Blainey the man, little was known. (For all his journalistic prominence—he has had columns in the *Weekend Australian* and in Melbourne's the *Age*—he seems to have only contempt for an A.J.P. Taylor-like vocation as performing historiographical flea.) Far from being famous for 15 minutes, he was profoundly respected for 15 years. Well before Whitlam's cut-price Camelot, the minority of Australians who read works of history, and the minority within that minority who had even the faintest inclination to appreciate admirable prose, had conceded Blainey's excellence at interpreting Australia's annals: his wielding of the microscope and the telescope with equal finesse, his refusal to let his intense interest in economic developments sink to vulgar determinism, his ability to combine an eye for astounding statistical detail with a positively poetic consciousness of wider philosophical and geopolitical trends. This last talent makes him write, at times, like an improbable—yet improbably convincing—cross between *Trivial Pursuit* and Frederick Jackson Turner.

Whether or not Blainey sees himself as an Australian counterpart to Turner (probably not, since his demeanor is so unpretentious and modest that one imagines he would disdain such comparisons), there is no mistaking the resemblances between the two men's attitudes to their respective nations. In 1988 appeared one of Blainey's least-known but most fascinating works, *The Great See-Saw*, which aimed at nothing less than tracing the history of optimism and pessimism in global economic, political, and cultural affairs from 1750. Here Blainey quotes the noble and melancholy music of Turner's 1903 *Atlantic Monthly* farewell to the pioneer age: "The Western wilds, from the Alleghenies to the Pacific, constituted the richest free gift that was ever spread out before civilized man. Never again can such an opportunity come to the sons of men." For an Australian audience, the dying fall of Turner's plaintive theme acquires, as it were, a Blaineyesque obbligato not necessarily audible to American ears. The knack of conveying what Turner conveys here, an "after the gold rush" sense of satiety, is at least as clear in Blainey's output as in Turner's. He often combines it with a tone of sober reproach for wasted national opportunities, and more generally with a persistent *tristesse* at a people that has squandered its ancestors' spiritual capital. This last quality he saves from any hint of oppressiveness by his taste for quietly sardonic phrasing.

Almost certainly Blainey cited Turner in the confident belief that the relevant passage would be totally new to most of his local readership, because what makes Blainey unique in the postwar Australian milieu (the sheer abundance of uniqueness with Blainey is one of his most notable features) is his preoccupation with the American experience. During the early 1980's, he was Harvard's Professor of Australian Studies, and it is as if he still occupies this chair in spirit if not in person. More recently, he has contributed articles to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and Washington's quarterly the *National Interest*. In a period when most Australian academics continue nurturing myths that American intellectual life produced nothing of consequence between *Walden* and *Annie Hall*, Blainey has done more than any Crocodile Dundee to keep the trans-Pacific lines of communication open. With this eagerness on his part has gone a lack of *angst* about Australia's British heritage, which is as refreshing as it is, in his profession, rare. To all but a handful of his colleagues, Britain is a veritable King Charles' head: a metaphor which loses none of its aptness through the fact that they are almost all vociferous republicans. For Blainey, by contrast, the British influence on Australian life is neither a divine gift nor the mark of Cain, but simply a fact that no more deserves hysterical abuse than do the multiplication tables.

Much the same temperate attitude informs Blainey's study of the Australia-America relationship. As far back as February 1983, when Paul Hogan was not yet even a gleam in Pauline Kael's eye, Blainey was noting the source of Australia's appeal to certain Americans: "There, almost, is South Dakota, before the first sharp axe was heard. 'If President McKinley or Theodore Roosevelt were alive today, I sometimes think that they would be living in Melbourne, Australia.' That comment came from a thoughtful American in his seventies." In *A Shorter History of Australia* he treats the topic less impressionistically and more deflatingly:

> Most Australians gained strong satisfaction from the feeling that a protective arm was everywhere, that society was fairer. The only catch was the sleight of hand. While part of the welfare bonus came from the redistribution of wealth, especially through the new income tax that richer people paid, much of the new welfare bonus, whether higher money or shorter hours, came from an incredibly complicated series of government regulations and payments which quietly penalized one group of wage earners so that another could be publicly rewarded. The rising umbrella of social security, soothing as it was to people who had battled all their life, also reduced incentives all around.
>
> In the years 1900 to 1925 the United States probably did more than Australia to aid the welfare of people in its control; it passed fewer protective laws but allowed incentives and unrestrained energy to increase the standard of living. . . . There is a delicate balance between shielding people and encouraging them, and the USA perhaps went too far in one direction and Australia in the other. The Soviet Union, born in 1917 and influenced a little by the exciting Australian and New Zealand experiments, would eventually show how the umbrella, if too big and cumbersome, exposed people far more than it protected them.

When Blainey was kind enough to let me interview him at his Melbourne home last November, the subject recurred:

GB: I think you probably learn more about Australian history, in one sense, if you keep American comparisons in mind, than you do from English comparisons, even though we're an English-derived society.

RJS: From the little that I know, many Americans were apparently so impressed with various Australian phenomena that, for example, they referred to the secret

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ballot as "the Australian ballot," which Australians have never done.

GB: Yes, they did in America.

RJS: You've mentioned in print the complete turnaround that the Australian Labor Party has made on such matters as tariffs, privatization, and—perhaps above all—immigration. How permanent or impermanent do you think these changes in the ALP mentality are?

GB: It's astonishing, the move away from protectionism and from government intervention in every facet of Australian life: because that was one of the characteristics of Australian social attitudes. But I don't see it as permanent. Well, nothing, of course, is! I believe that there will be a time when the forces in favor of regulation will be much stronger in Australia than they are at present.

RJS: Do you think that a neo-Chifley would emerge from the ranks of the ALP? [Ben Chifley, as Prime Minister from 1945-49, severely rationed postwar gasoline use and unsuccessfully aimed to nationalize all banks.]

GB: I don't see that as impossible.

RJS: In America, there seems to be a rise in America First sentiment: what with Pat Buchanan, Perot getting a fifth of the presidential vote in 1992, and California's present governor. How likely do you think a similar trend is here within the next five years or so?

GB: America, of course, has got a more acute immigration problem than Australia. I now expect that the reversal will come in America before it comes in Australia. I don't know what we would do, though, if there were serious political breakdowns in parts of the Indonesian empire. Let's say, for argument's sake, that East Timorese came here in their hundreds of thousands. My instinct is that we haven't got the will to do anything.

It was precisely because Blainey commands the global outlook of the true patriot (in contrast to his foes, who manage to combine endless denunciations of nationalism with a fixed belief in *Terra Australia* as the cynosure of all human history) that his 1984 Warrnambool remarks brewed so destructive a storm. As he dryly observed in *All For Australia*, the long pamphlet which he produced later that year:

> Occupying a carefully selected patch of ground in the middle, I was in fact being more provocative than if I had sat at either end. If I had simply said, 'Let us bring back White Australia,' my remarks would have been merely a week-long sensation. If I had been at the other extreme, and supported even more Asian immigration, I would not have stood out amongst the variety of bureaucrats, politicians, and intellectuals who wish or say that such is the desirable policy.

For Blainey—as, indeed, for anyone else who has approached the issue with a historian's detachment, rather than a propagandist's *ad hominem* spite—it is meaningless to prate about multiculturalism in Australia unless one shows equal determination to examine multiculturalism in our neighbors' contexts. This is all the more evident if Paul Keating's slogan "Australia is a part of Asia" has any intellectual plausibility. From how much taxpayer-funded multicultural jabbering do the Chinese benefit in Malaysia; the Vietnamese, in China; the Sikhs, in India; the Tamils, in Sri Lanka; the Karens, in Burma; or the Ainu, in Japan? Might not a genuinely self-Asianizing policy on Australian federal and state governments' part ensure an increase, rather than a diminution, in the amount of strong-arm stuff that Joe Sixpack may legitimately mete out to the wrong kind of imported personage? These inquiries, during the aftermath of 1984's anti-Blainey hysteria, had no sooner dawned in Australians' minds than they were suppressed therefrom. The stentorian cant exuded by such Periclean orators as Stewart West (Bob Hawke's first Immigration Minister) and Cliff Dolan (then head of the Australian Council of Trade Unions) within weeks of Blainey's initial speech is best forgotten, as by happy chance West and Dolan have themselves been over the intervening years. Extended quotation from their verbiage in these pages would accord its original sources a respectability which they did nothing, at the time or at subsequent periods, to deserve. What should never be forgotten, however, is the zeal of ostensibly serious newspapers to ginger up a story that in its original form appeared far too flavorless for comfort. Blainey himself lamented *in retrospect:*

> Human error tended to distort the controversy. The report of my speech in the *Age* contained the strange statement that Asian immigrants should be given $1,000 to go elsewhere. As I did not make such a statement—it contradicted one of my main arguments—I wrote letters of denial to the press. False news and rumors are never completely overtaken by the subsequent denials, which set out in pursuit. The $1,000 statement has long since ceased to circulate, but it caused concern and pain to many Asian immigrants. Unfortunately it also gained wide circulation overseas. In Southeast Asia it was never overtaken by the refutal.

In these circumstances, and given the total failure of those responsible for the original misinformation to experience either punishment or remorse, the names of those who did defend Blainey's warnings (or, more generally, his right to be heard in a culture that brags without surcease of its outward democratic forms) also warrant recollection. John Stone—erstwhile Secretary of the Federal Treasury, and afterward a Queensland senator—was one. Another was Blainey's fellow Melbourne historian, Claudio Veliz, who considered some of Blainey's predictions overpessimistic, but who spiritedly trounced Blainey's more foolish intradisciplinary antagonists. As a Chilean, Veliz possesses a somewhat better-calibrated response mechanism to governmental browbeating than can necessarily be expected from the native tenured product. The pity remains that so few in professional and political circles manifested sufficient moxie to follow Stone's or Veliz's lead.

Among the original anti-Blainey fervor's less predictable consequences was a serious division (quickly papered over, but still noticeable at even the gentlest poking around) within environmentalists' ranks. Since there, if anywhere, the belief that every prospect pleases and only man is vile could flourish without constraint, logic indicates that the fewer men there are in Australia, the more pleasant Australia's own prospects will strike environmentalists as being. But

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with the emergence of strident opposition to Blainey, the shrewder and more self-interested environmentalists did an 180-degree turn. They had realized that those who actively wished Australia's population to decrease were, if only by default, advocating reduction in immigration levels; were thus laying themselves open to charges of racism; and were guaranteeing that Blainey's fate in civic discourse would be their own. Neither the responsibilities of upholding truth, nor the desire to warn a wide public of threats to the ecosystem that an augmented Australian population might bring, retained any force against the paralyzing terror of being subjected to the same treatment which Blainey had experienced. Beside the prospect of that destiny, mere Malthusian visions of nationwide hunger came to resemble the most evanescent bagatelles.

GB: In the 1970's, the "dark greens" were a powerful source of support for Australia's low-immigration policy. But when I started to make speeches, the "dark greens" retreated almost immediately from the immigration issue. There's a book by Katharine Betts, *Ideology and Immigration*, which mentions what happened.

Dr. Betts, a Melbourne sociologist, discusses in her 1988 volume the Australian Conservation Foundation's plan to hold a conference on population in August 1984. This event was cancelled, she writes, "out of fear that the organization would be associated with the Blainey phenomenon." She continues:

> The response to Blainey highlighted the way in which the taboo functioned but it did not remove it. Rather, his experience stood as a salutary warning of the risks of ignoring it. In the absence of Parliamentary opposition to the goal of population increase, and the absence of sustained critical attention from the intelligentsia, the growth lobby experienced no real check.

Twelve years on, the climate of Australian opinion has in some respects mellowed almost unimaginably. Blainey is now Chancellor at the University of Ballarat, which gold-mining metropolis his writings so often celebrate. Last year the Keating government, with uncharacteristic freedom from fanfare, reduced Australians' immigrant quota (which still stands at over 90,000, so we are not exactly about to endure Ethnic Cleansing Time). And yet one only has to pick up a morning tabloid for the *plus a change* syndrome to spring into renewed life.

The scandal of compulsory voting, against which Blainey has long and thus far fruitlessly inveighed, continues: coupled, what is more, with a citizenship policy that makes it literally easier to get an Australian passport than to get an Australian dog license. As of 1984, any grunting Third World monoglot who has managed to reside in Australia for two years has become eligible for citizenship. Nor need he give up citizenship in his country of birth; indeed, an entire governmental propaganda machine exists for encouraging him—even when he needs no encouragement—to keep such prior affiliations, this being a staple of the multicultural nirvana. Seen in the light of this information, the desperate desire of Labor at both the state and federal level to keep compulsory voting on the statute books can be understood. Wherever ethnic lobbies are at their weakest (Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia), there Labor is now also at its weakest.

At the March 2 election, John Howard became Prime Minister with a majority of 42 seats in the House of Representatives. Graeme Campbell easily defeated his ALP opponent (Western Australia's former Deputy Premier Ian Taylor), and obtained 62 percent of the popular vote.

Western Australian Labor parliamentarian Graeme Campbell, Blainey's firmest supporter in the House of Representatives—and one apt to condemn massive immigration in far sharper terms than Blainey has ever employed—was stripped last year of his party's endorsement. (He contested his Kalgoorlie constituency as an Independent.) On what we must apparently continue calling the opposite side of Australian politics, Liberal-National Coalition leader John Howard made it his most earnest endeavor to promise even more handouts for ethnic nomenclatures—not to mention whales, AIDS-infected gay activists, and other such great Australians—than the Labor Party disseminated. Howard has not forgotten the media abuse he received between 1985 and 1989, when in his first term leading the Coalition he actually dared to suggest that heterosexual couples warranted more support than homosexual ones, and that heterosexual couples who got married and spoke English might be more deserving still.

Amid such spectacles, we could do much worse than ponder a weighty and yet unassertive sentence that Blainey published eight years ago: "Democracy is a freak condition in the world's history: civil liberties are not common liberties even today, and most people in the world have never possessed them." When the eupeptic delusions of Fukuyama have been altogether lost to memory—or else relegated to a footnote of unsavory scholarship, rather like Kraft-Ebing—the stoic temper of a Blainey will remain to reassure and daunt: a temper simultaneously as antique as Seneca, and as modern in its unillusioned patience as Primo Levi.

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Letter From Lagado University

by John N. Frary

Resourcemammal Eroticism

◆

Readers who have been attentive to the slashing edge of the Postmodernist Project will be aware of Lagado University's vanguard role at the Modern Language Association's 1995 meeting. On that occasion a session conducted entirely by the LU English Department's faculty, "Intersections of Sex and Animal Husbandry: The Love that Dare not Low its Name," was rated the most innovative presentation in MLA history. Oscar Odsodd's "The Erotic Moos: Articulations of Bovine Buggery," Vito-Extravaganzo Piustranostrano's "Sheep Thrills: Engendering the Ovine Other," and Hector Mondo-Bizarro's "Phrasing the Graze: Intimations of Man-Kine Eroticism on Alluvial Plains in Eighteenth Century Spanish Pastoral Poetry" concerted an unprecedented challenge to homospeciesnormativity's underlying assumptions. It was received with an enthusiasm befitting its importance.

It is not surprising, then, that the Lagado faculty's papers drew large audi-

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ences at the MLA's 111th conference in Chicago. The LU session, "Tall in the Stall: Exploring Transgressive Sexual Sites," was far and away the best attended at the convention. Hector Mondo-Bizarro, in "Psychic Charges from the Intersecting Public and Private Zones Within the Stalls of Institutional Men's Room," explained how the magnetizing pull of the dangers lurking behind the toilet stall door led to homophobic anticommunism and Proposition 13. Although Oscar Odsodd was unable to attend owing to a painful accident incurred during an intimate celebration of diversity at the University of South Dakota College of Agriculture's Bovine Research Center, his "Barn Buns: Oh Wow Brown Cow!" was read by Professor Piustranostrano to a spirited response. Odsodd's paper, which problematized heterospecies sexual difference, continued his exploration of themes adumbrated at last year's session.

Leading off the session entitled "Transgressions for the Twenty-first Century: Great Leaps Forward," LU's Elizabeth Burke-Hare delivered "At the Jeffrey Dahmer Delicatessen: A Study of the Anthropophagian Aesthetic in Contemporary Culture." This paper explored the sometimes gruesome interplay between life and art, between actual anthropophagia and textual anthropophagia. Rather than exclude cannibalism from critical consideration by dismissing it as a mere crime, Burke-Hare urged her audience to ponder the killer-cannibal's artistic role—and their own experience as witnesses, vicarious consumers, or voyeurs.

Professor Harry Glibb chairmammaled a well-attended afternoon session on "Discourse Liberation: Overcoming First Amendment Barriers," and LU's Elektra Hardwitch presented "Free Speech and Hate Silence," a review of strategies for dealing with yawning, slumping, snoring, shuffling, doodling, diddling, grimacing, groaning, horse-race handicapping, and comic-book reading in the classroom by sexist-racist-homophobic-reactionary undergraduate elements determined to undermine Postmodernist discourse by disruptive apathy. Her paper ended at 9:30, when a graduate student in the front row had some kind of fit and the entire audience escaped in the confusion.

An LU graduate student, J.F. Bodley, received the MLA "Postmod Bod Door Prize" for a paper entitled "The Embodiment of the 'Indian' Body within the Body of Texts concerning Captive White Bodies: Engendering the American Self as the Body of (Dis)Embodied Alterity." The judges felt the title of Bodley's paper embodied this year's theme—the Embodiment of the Body—more profusely than any other at the convention.

The MLA Central Control Commission did, however, revoke Professor George S. Stodgett's lifetime membership and forbid his attendance at all future MLA functions. Stodgett was overheard describing the graduate students at the Convention as "the unemployable in pursuit of the unintelligible." The CCC pronounced this kind of insensitivity intolerable. Stodgett's colleagues (who have been encouraging him to retire since 1979) were almost unanimous in endorsing the revocation.

It should also be noted that Henry "Huckleberry" Slagg, a hobo stranded in Kafka, South Dakota, when the old Mud Butte, White Owl, and Wanblee Railroad failed in 1935, passed away at the beginning of May, regretted by all at LU. Henry Slagg first attracted the attention and sympathy of the Lagado community during the Decade of Greed. As the only year-round, full-time, long-service certified Homeless Person in the city of Kafka—or within a 180-mile radius of Lagado University—he came to assume a pivotal role in every one of the marches, vigils, rallies, sit-ins, sit-outs, sit-downs, and sit-ups held by Youth Against War, Fascism and Homelessness, the LU Coalition for the Homeless, and Advocates for the Homeless in America.

Many departments at Lagado utilized Slagg as a valuable resourcemammal—he figured in at least a dozen dissertations by Ph.D. candidates in Sociology, Psychology, and Anthropology—but "Huck" will always be remembered with special fondness in the English Department. Between 1985 and 1992 he appeared in half the papers turned in by the students in Harry Glibb's "Literatures of the American Experience." A LUNexis survey reveals that Slagg recurs 13,033 times in creative writing papers by LU students during the seven-year period. He was also the subject of three published poems by the faculty.

In 1992 "Huck" declared that he was too old to continue, nailed a mailbox up in front of the old MBWO&W caboose that sheltered him, and announced his retirement from the homeless profession.

It need hardly be said that everyone in the English Department respected Henry Slagg's wishes. In any case, homelessness is an 80's kind of thing, and most members of the Lagado community agreed that it was time to move on to the concerns of the 90's.

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Letter From Inner Israel

by Jacob Neusner

Our Free, Christian Land

◆

St. Petersburg—A while back, synagogue members and civil rights groups picketed the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, when the Coral Ridge Ministries held a conference on "Reclaiming America for Christ." The local newspaper reported, "Thousands of Christian activists from across the nation discussed such topics as, 'reclaiming the public schools,' 'battle for our children's souls,' 'winning the new civil war: recapturing America's values,' and 'why liberals win and what we can do about it.'"

When Jews picket Christians, one thing is clear: this is a free country! Not only is everyone free to say what he wants, but the smallest minorities speak with the loudest voices. That means they are not afraid.

In Germany recently, a court in Bavaria said crucifixes could not hang on classroom walls in public schools. The organized German Jewish community of some 55,000 maintained absolute and total silence. Not a single Jew said what everyone (including ten million Muslims) was thinking: that this proves Germany is not a free country. Public opinion will not tolerate difference when it comes to what really matters. But, as we learned in Fort Lauderdale, America is different.

The protesters in Florida objected on

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two grounds: first, separation of church and state precludes praying in schools; and second, statements that America "had been founded by Christians alone" are inaccurate and offensive. A local rabbi argued that the ministries "are promoting . . . principles such as exclusion and a narrow definition of morality." The newspaper further reported, "A large contingent of the protest came from the gay and lesbian community, as well as ACLU members and Muslim activists."

So the organized Jewish community, led by rabbis and synagogue members, now assumes leadership of far-left causes—in the name of Judaism. A conference member responded, "Much of what we are discussing at the conference deals with the values stated in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. The Christian religion is based on the Jewish religion."

Presenting themselves not as an ethnic but a religious group, engaged not in political but in religious action, these Jews made history. So far as I know, Jews, in the name of Judaism, picketing Christians assembled in the name of Christianity represents an authentic innovation—a true first in the history of the Jewish people for the last 2,000 years! Never before, nowhere else in the world today, has such a thing happened or could such a thing take place. What a tribute to the freedom that Americans accord to one another and to the profound toleration that Americans have for one another.

But to whose credit? Since over 95 percent of those Americans who profess a religion describe themselves as Christians, the answer is clear. Left, center, and right—Christians affirm the tradition of completely free public debate, even on sensitive religious questions, and Jews (among others), by their actions, acknowledge that fact. No better evidence of American exceptionalism, now and in the past, presents itself. In no other country have Jews conducted themselves in such a way, and it would be hard for the Christian right to refute its enemies more eloquently than the Coral Ridge Presbyterians did: going about their business with respect for those who, outside the door, chose to protest, saying simply, "The Christian religion is based on the Jewish religion."

So if it is a Christian country, then Christians have much in which to take pride. That makes all the more puzzling the controversy over the statement, "America is a Christian country." What should offend anyone in the claim that the vast majority of Americans are Christian, and that the history of this country is the story of how serious Christians conducted themselves in peace and in war? If not Christian, than what?

Well, is America a Christian country today? Yes, but *not only* Christian. Some people think America is *basically* a Christian country, because different forms of Christianity have predominated throughout this country's history and have defined much of its culture and society. The vast majority of Americans who are religious—and that means most of us—are Christian by religion. But to be a true American, one can hold another religion or no religion at all. The first religions of America were those of the Native Americans, and while Protestantism and Roman Catholicism laid the foundations of American society, America had a Jewish community from nearly the beginning, the first synagogues dating back to the mid-17th century.

Today this country has become the meeting place for nearly all the living religions of the world, with the Zoroastrian, Shinto, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu religions well represented. Various religious groups from the Caribbean and from Africa and Latin America likewise flourish. Pretty much every religion in the world is practiced by some Americans. When Christians call it "a Christian country," some certainly mean to exclude non-Christians. But many simply mean that the majority of Americans stand for something, and something of worth. The news from Fort Lauderdale underscores this simple fact.

If you doubt it, find me some Bahai in Iran to picket the mosques, or some Christians in Egypt to do the same, or let's go to the Western Wall in Jerusalem and worship in the manner of Reform Judaism. To cut closer to home still, try getting a Jewish group to say that America is the best place in the world, and in all of Jewish history, to practice Judaism. I did, in the *Washington Post* around a decade ago, and I can report from years of experience that the American Jewish community demands for itself what it will not accord to others, that is, the right to speak freely. The organized Jewish community prefers to marginalize and drive out difference of opinion, not to debate it, and that accounts for its chronic sectarianism.

In Islam and in Judaism, religious expression outside of the enforced consensus is dangerous. In Iran and in Egypt, you can lose your life for less. If you're a Reform Jew at the Wall without a skull cap and reciting a prayer, you might well get your head bashed in. When Orthodox women said their prayers at the Wall a few years back, they were pelted with rotten tomatoes and bridge chairs. And in the liberal American Jewish community, to contradict either the radical left or the ethnic dogma is to get yourself marginalized.

But Christianity, for its part, gave up on the Inquisition in the 18th century, and neither does it burn witches anymore. So much for the "threat" from the Christian right.

Jacob Neusner is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida in Tampa. His latest book, with his son, Noam M.M. Neusner, is The Price of Excellence: Universities in Conflict During the Cold War Era (*Continuum*).

LIBERAL ARTS

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO SPIKE

Harry Smith of *CBS News* and Peter Jennings of *ABC News* delivered the following account of an incident in Bosnia. Brackets indicate the facts they omitted.

Walking over Vrbanja bridge [from the Muslim to the Serb side, after being guaranteed safe passage by Muslims], Bosko and Admira, Bosnia's "Romeo and Juliet," were shot [in the back] by [Muslim] snipers, and left [to rot] for eight days. [They had intended to move to Serbia.] Their bodies were recovered by the Serbs [crawling under Muslim fire]. The bodies were exhumed from the Serb soldiers' cemetery and reburied in the Lion Cemetery. [Admira and Bosko lie at the foot of Muslim grave markers. Bosko was a Christian.]

—J. Peter Maher

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EDUCATION

Affirmative Action and the Academy

by Philip Jenkins

While most of us would deny that the United States has an official ideology, much of our daily life is profoundly shaped by a body of principles that are manifested in policies known as affirmative action, multiculturalism, and "diversity." These decide matters as fundamental to one's life-chances as access to jobs and education, to social mobility and economic status, while the underlying principles have been absolutely internalized by millions who have given no thought to the ideological system they represent. This theoretical structure dominates our thought and conduct at least as pervasively as Marxism ever guided the population of the former Soviet Union or the present China. This is all the more remarkable because the theory in question has no immediately obvious name, no founding texts or writings, no groundbreaking individuals whose icons are given places of honor by the party faithful. We cannot point to paleo- or neoversions of the theory, no orthodox or heretical strands. Paradoxically, though, the basic principles of the model are regarded with such dogmatic veneration by its adherents that criticism or discussion is unthinkable. Careers have been destroyed by the devotees of this stealth theory.

There are two reasons for this lack of definition. First, the theoretical framework that gave us affirmative action originated as an ad hoc set of responses to what were perceived as egregious injustices, and these emotional reactions subsequently exercised a critical influence on policymaking. The theory thus developed to buttress the policy, rather than the other way around. Second, the ideology is not expounded at length because if it were, the basic principles would have to be admitted and discussed, and it would rapidly become apparent that these notions would carry no public support whatever, being thoroughly inimical to conventional concepts of democracy, fairness, and common sense. We therefore find the curious situation that a hugely influential theory of social organization and reform survives only by virtue of not being discussed, and indeed its advocates pursue a consistent strategy of avoiding an overt definition of principles. A strange theory indeed, all the more so since so many countries around the world are on the verge of imitating the American experiment in this area. This situation has a peculiar relevance for me personally, as I have spent most of my working life in the American higher education system, a world dominated by the system of structural racial and gender privilege that is called affirmative action. If this scheme is indeed to become worldwide, then I can truly say that I have seen the future at firsthand, and it absolutely does not work.

Affirmative action originated in the widespread public outrage at black oppression prior to the civil rights era, and the notion that vigorous government action was requested to counteract centuries of abuse. While this approach commanded wide public support, there was always a basic confusion about what exactly government was meant to do. A large majority of the population favored the creation of legal mechanisms to combat discrimination, especially in employment, and the only organized opposition to this idea came from a largely discredited group of segregationist politicians who warned that civil rights would ultimately mean a new form of racial bias against whites, and the institution of racial quotas. These warnings received little attention, and political leaders declared (probably sincerely) that neither outcome was intended or probable.

In the decade after 1965, however, a number of developments radically transformed the nature of "nondiscrimination." The courts played a pivotal role, with a series of decisions that enlarged the scope of discrimination and moved in the direction of equal outcome rather than equal opportunity. This meant, for example, that employers were prohibited from using a wide range of hiring criteria which had the de facto effect of eliminating more black than white applicants. The courts also supported federal schemes to ensure that employers moved toward a certain proportion of minority employees, students or contractors, effectively the quota system that had specifically been ruled out in the 1965 debates. This meant adopting differential racial criteria, such as the long-clandestine practice of "race-norming" test scores. (For instance, X receives 89 points on a test, Y receives 79. X scores at the 80th centile for whites, while Y scores at the 82nd centile for blacks. This means that Y's score is *higher* than X's, and is permanently and officially recorded as such, without any inkling of the sleight of hand which made a score of 79 superior to one of 89. In summary, Y gets the job or the university scholarship.) Still more explosive, the courts tended to place the burden of proof on defendants in discrimination lawsuits, making it exceedingly difficult to show that a limited minority presence did not amount to systematic discrimination. By the late 1970's, most employers had got the message that pro-minority discrimination was not only acceptable but essential, especially for those who had any hope of dealing with federal or state government. The 1978 *Bakke* decision consecrated the new regime.

Moreover, "minority" had now subtly expanded to include categories far beyond the intended beneficiaries of the original civil rights legislation, meaning Americans of African descent. The same principles now applied to all racial minorities, and most critically, to women, all of whom now required the same form of group compensation for past maltreatment. The oddities of the theory are, or should be, obvious. Fundamental to the notion of compensation is that there are identifiable groups who have historically gained or lost by discrimination. The black-white question alone involves the acceptance of the category "white," which while including the descendants of slave-masters and traders, also covers the heirs of Slavic miners, Irish laborers, or Jewish sweatshop workers, including those who had not set foot

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on American soil in the slave era. The losers are an equally diverse group. While it is easy to agree that American blacks with few exceptions were consistently victims of collective discrimination, it takes a huge amount of special pleading to see women as a community in remotely the same sense, as an oppressed race or colonized people, or as the heirs of such (if they are the descendants of oppressed women of bygone days, then so, of course, are all men). And only the most blinkered racial stereotyping can view "Hispanics" as an oppressed category, rather than an immense and complex range of social and ethnic groups varying from brutalized peasants to pure *hidalgos*. Yet the most blue-blooded and wealthy Latina qualifies as an affirmative action hire quite as much as the grandson of a black sharecropper: more so, in fact, since as a Hispanic and a woman, she is the imagined victim of double abuse, and therefore can be ticked in two columns in the federal forms.

But even assuming that all the ancillary categories had been subject to past discrimination comparable to that of blacks, the principles that now gained acceptance were quite bizarre. Most basic of these "self-evident" truths is the notion of group rights, the sense that the individual exists and has rights only in terms of his or her collective status. Individuals are not created equal and have no inalienable rights, though they might be marked by indelible guilt for the perceived deeds of their ancestors. This is by no means a new principle, and was in fact the root of the American segregation system, to say nothing of the network of privilege that undergirded the European *ancien régime*. Linked to collectivist theory is a mutant sub-Marxist vision of existence as a struggle between the powerful and the powerless, each perceived in collective terms based on gender and ethnicity and the necessity for state action to side with the "wretched of the earth." Once again, this is nothing new, as a generation of Soviet legal theorists in the 1920's had evolved a radical jurisprudence based on class interests, so that the main element of a criminal trial consisted of the exploration of the social and economic background of the various participants, and the consequent allocation of punishment based on family history. While not novel ideas, none has a particularly distinguished pedigree within the American intellectual tradition, and one might think that Soviet legal theory and *ancien régime* privilege both represent the diametric opposite of democratic values and individualism. I, for one, would love to see a supporter of affirmative action abandon the customary charade that the system is based on noble goals like equal opportunity and the elimination of racism, and admit its authentic precedents, in the France of the 1720's or the Soviet Union of the 1920's.

Over the last year, affirmative action has become one of the central issues of partisan debate in the United States, and the more attention that is paid to it, the more opposition grows, interestingly among blacks and other minorities as well as whites. The defenses mounted for the system have been incredibly weak, and have pivoted on the assertion that opponents want to return to racial discrimination, while they are actually the ones seeking to abolish it. There has also been the vulgar trivialization of the issue as a pathetic grievance of "angry white guys." (Did anyone ever condescend to Martin Luther King sufficiently to describe him as an "angry black guy"?)

It now appears certain that the legal establishment of racial discrimination in this country is doomed, though the exact timing of the reform is unclear: it may go within months, or it may slither into the new century, but its fate is sealed in the very near future. At this point, we encounter the fascinating situation of what happens when a powerful, overarching theory collapses, leaving behind the whole congeries of laws and policies which had sustained it. There are few recent precedents for this: even when the Soviet Union died, communism was regretted by few outside the hard-core officeholder and the sentimental irredentists, and few of those actually believed the ideology any more. The coming social revolution in America will be a very different and far more traumatic event, with a profound effect on millions who are sincere true believers, and who are not merely going through the ritual motions.

To understand the impending crisis, it is useful to recollect the experience of segregation, which was a far more serious affair than a simple refusal to allow a particular person to use a given water fountain. It represented a whole mentality that pervaded the culture, even the thinking of people who, had they stopped to consider at length, would have rejected the underlying ideas. Segregation made a world in which it was effectively impossible to act or live justly, however good the intent of individuals. Moreover, the disease penetrated so deep that the culture found it unimaginable to do away with this basic reality, and came to fear even the discussion of change. The concrete certitude was best expressed in the defiant but ultimately pathetic slogan, "Segregation Today, Segregation Forever."

For all the general dissatisfaction and controversy about affirmative action and multiculturalism, no one can understand the utter permeation of the theory and its associated value-system without having witnessed it at its purest, in American higher education. That the universities are such a fortress of *multicult* results from a bizarre alliance that emerged during the last two decades, when feminist and left-liberal ideas established a powerful ideological presence in academic departments, while conservative administrators faced the legal nightmare of possible discrimination suits and the loss of federal funding. The two sides, oil and water in every other regard, formed a working coalition to establish an extreme system of institutional discrimination that favored women and minority faculty and students.

In case "expanding pluralism" sounds like a worthwhile goal, the corollary of this is the erosion of the principle that *quality alone* should serve as the criterion for hiring or advancement. Virtually every hiring and personnel decision in a modern university involves at least an element of gender and racial discrimination, and if anyone ever states that affirmative action simply means giving preference to an equally qualified minority candidate, then he is either ignorant or disingenuous. At best, it means "cooking" short-lists so that they always reflect "diversity"; at its worst, it means choosing the *least* unqualified of the available pool of female or minority applicants.

To quote one of the great religious leaders of our time, the late Jim Jones of "Jonestown" once remarked, "What goes on in here is so [expletive] weird that nobody's going to believe anything you tell them on the outside." This is the only explanation of what has been tolerated in American universities over the last decade or so, as it is inconceivable that either state legislators or tuition-paying parents have the slightest idea of the conduct of life within the

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Academic Triangle. This is a world of faculty meetings where people count up the points they will receive for hiring a black woman as opposed to a Hispanic man; where chuckles greet the objection that X, being appointed as a full professor, has a résumé that would perhaps equip him to lecture part-time in a community college. This is a society in which the otherwise unemployable find superbly paid jobs as of "affirmative action officers," pushing forms that in their complexity would have done credit to one of the more arcane Oriental civil services at its height, while operating an enforcement machinery that collects reports of remarks deemed hostile to affirmative action and diversity. The practice is, of course, clandestine, like virtually every other aspect of this mirror world, especially the astonishing salary differentials between minority and white faculty of vaguely equal qualifications (and yes, Virginia, the differential does favor the minority, and by a huge margin). There are also superb anecdotal cases, like the woman who developed a magnificent career based on adopting a Hispanic surname, which catapulted her into the upper ranks of her profession within a few years of completing her mediocre doctorate. There are countless victims of this routinized injustice, including many white academics, but also the many talented minority professors of high ability and outstanding scholarship whose achievements can be so churlishly dismissed as the product of preferential treatment.

While faculty hiring offers abundant space for grim humor, so does the area of student recruitment, where the zeal to promote a "diverse" student body has led to discriminatory practices of astonishing proportions. Some universities use race-norming; others use "incentive awards," basically paying students of certain specified races to stay in college and maintain grades. This might be regarded as harmless were the universe of student places not finite, and the increased admission of the severely underqualified from one race means refusing the adequately or well-qualified from other races. To nobody's surprise, the victims of the new segregation system come from groups which were, shall we say, not entirely responsible for the horrors of slavery, including Jews and Asians. Nor have these groups received preferential treatment in American history, as both were victims of the most severe segregation and quota systems in the bad old days. Where a group performs indecently well in academic performance, it is always much easier to create a quota than to look seriously at what might be emulated in their cultural traditions or work habits.

None of these individual difficulties is one whit as serious as the internalization of these bizarre and unjust principles by virtually everyone in a position of authority. Only the crudest form of political tyranny depends on naked fear; the most successful depend on drawing the vast majority into some form of complicity with the regime, and thereby offering some form of profit or temporary advantage, and once compromised, it becomes harder to revert to total opposition. In the discrimination system prevailing within American universities, the only correct moral decision is probably to refuse all cooperation, to refuse, for example, to participate in hiring decisions, which many conscientious faculty already do to the best of their ability.

Remarkably, this enclosed world continues within its terrarium utterly unaware of its fragility, of the growing popular disaffection with universities, professors, and college fees, that has so far been contained only by the Jim Jones principle spelled out above. Nor do administrators, even those of real intelligence, have any idea of the tenuous legal principles on which affirmative action is built. In reality, everything rests on a few federal statutes that now appear very delicate indeed. Once these laws are removed, the hiring or promoting of someone on the grounds of gender or ethnicity becomes exactly what it should be, an actionable form of job discrimination. Administrators have not yet begun to realize the consequences waiting to descend, and the odds are that they will carry on as normal until the first discrimination suits hit them, probably threatening to cripple whole universities financially. What will they do then: lay off faculty or raise fees?

Other consequences are more interesting, including the mass unemployment of the affirmative action bureaucracy, the diversity empire. On the other hand, the hiring decisions of the last two decades have been made within that curious legal arrangement known as academic tenure, which means that unless they actually kill someone, it is virtually impossible to remove professors, no matter how mentally or morally extinct. This means that we face the survival well into the next century of a despairing caste of the weakest affirmative action faculty, the hopeless but tenured, who will find they can neither move up nor out. Well into the 2030's, they will probably be a source for bitterness and constant complaint about systematic bias, and presumably a focus for student activism. All told, the consequences for financial stability, faculty morale, and administrative stability within the universities are horrendous, and this scenario is likely to come to pass not in decades, but within five years or so. The end of affirmative action could be

LIBERAL ARTS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

According to the March 1996 issue of *Border Watch*, a Hmong immigrant in Fresno, California, named Chai Thai Moua has been convicted of directing one of his relatives to kill a three-month-old German Shepherd, in order to exorcise an evil spirit that had "possessed" Moua's wife. Like many Hmong, Moua believes that "the released soul of a dog has keen eyesight and is particularly effective in tracking down spirits." Moua's sentence includes probation, community service, and a fine, but he plans to appeal his conviction "on grounds of religious freedom."

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viewed as a metaphorical neutron bomb, which will leave college buildings standing, while annihilating their inhabitants.

With a system of institutional injustice like segregation, the degree of bitterness that accompanies its fall is directly proportionate to the effort put into the last-ditch defense of a hopeless cause. Ultimately, the system can be purged, and in much of the South, segregation now seems like a distant nightmare. There was a delicious symbolic moment when George ("Segregation Forever") Wallace won reelection as governor of Alabama with heavy black support and regularly appeared at black churches and social events. The higher education world can similarly free itself, but it will take decades, and the first step is to acknowledge the possibility that change must come, and come soon.

Philip Jenkins is a professor of history and religious studies at Penn State University and author, most recently, of Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Social Crisis.

Abolishing Compulsory School Attendance Laws

by Aaron Steelman

The state of Colorado recently did something revolutionary, at least it tried to. Last November, Republican State Representative Russ George introduced an amendment to Colorado's "Children Code"—a set of laws dealing with child welfare issues, including the education of Colorado's 650,000 students—that would have abolished that state's compulsory school attendance laws. A similar proposal was introduced in 1976 by Representative Tom Tancredo, now president of the Independence Institute, a pro-market public policy organization in Golden, Colorado.

George—most emphatically not an ideologue—proposed the amendment for one simple reason: he simply believes the compulsory schooling laws are not doing what they were intended to do. Instead of bringing valuable education to all, they have, in George's opinion, actually produced generations of children whose education can be described as mediocre at best. The many students who come to school interested in learning suffer from the presence of disruptive students who would rather be anywhere else than in the classroom, and who, without the compulsory attendance laws, would be. Teachers spend too much time dealing with these troubled students and too little time doing their primary duty: dispensing knowledge, says George. Defending his position, he stated: "The real question we're asking ourselves is 'Where do we focus our attention?' Do we focus it on the good kids or on the bad kids? So often the bad kids get a higher degree of attention and dollars. We need to ask ourselves, is that a price that's too high to pay? It's dragging down the quality of education for so many others. If I have to choose, I choose in favor of the kids who want to be in school and who want to learn. I don't know that public schools get any better when you turn them into places of detention."

Others were less narrowly utilitarian in their support of the amendment. When asked her opinion on the issue, Republican State Representative Jeanne Adkins asked: "Is it society's role to force kids to stay in school?" And Tom Tancredo added: "The dumbest thing we do as a society is to say we value education and then say we'll put you in jail if you don't accept it."

Of course, many disagreed. The Democratic Senate Minority Leader, Mike Feeley, said: "We don't throw away children in Colorado, and we think that is exactly what this effort is." Assistant House Minority Leader Diana DeGette called George's idea "a step back into the 18th century." And Lynn Simons, the U.S. Education Department's regional representative, labeled it "a terrible idea, an abandonment of children and gross societal neglect."

As a result of such attacks by fellow legislators, editorials in the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Post* denouncing the idea, and a few Republicans waffling at the last moment, George's amendment was killed in the House Judiciary Committee on February 20. State Representative Vicki Agler, one of the pivotal committee Republicans who in the end sided with the state and federal departments of education, stated that she had voted against it so that the public debate could be refocused "on other important parts of the bill."

In retrospect, it is not surprising that George's amendment failed. People who share their federal colleagues' opinion that balancing the federal budget in seven years is unduly rash are unlikely to repeal any significant law or statute with one stroke of the pen. But why did it provoke such bitter outrage by some legislators? Because, if passed, it would have cut to the heart of their ability to run their constituents' lives.

The entire corrupt system of government schools is dependent upon the compulsory attendance laws; repeal these laws, and the government schools will wither. Without compulsory attendance laws, the state would no longer be able to define what is and what is not an "acceptable" school. Parents who choose to homeschool their children would no longer have to submit "credentials" and "progress reports" verifying their ability to instruct their own children, and schools that employ unorthodox methods—such as rejecting the egalitarian approach employed by most public schools that all children are intellectually equal and hence should be educated uniformly—would no longer be terrorized by state accreditors. A myriad of new options would be opened to those parents who had not wanted to send their children to government schools but who, due to governmental regulation, were forced to. Those schools that truly work would flourish, and those that proved inefficient—is there any question as to which category government schools would fall into?—would eventually fall by the wayside. The state's role in education would be lessened dramatically, as would the horrid consequence of trusting the education of children to government.

From the inception, government schools were meant to inculcate certain "values" in their pupils. One such value was obedience to the present regime. As Murray Rothbard pointed out, "One of the most enthusiastic supporters of a public and compulsory school system was the 'Essex Junto,' a group of prominent Federalist merchants and lawyers in Boston hailing originally from Essex County, Massachusetts. The Essexmen were particularly eager for an extensive public school system so as to have the youth 'taught proper subordination.' For, as Essexman Stephen Higginson, a leading Boston merchant, put it, 'the people must be taught to confide in and reverence their rulers.'"

Other values that are now taught in

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our public schools are more recent in origin, yet no less despicable. Sheldon Richman, the author of *Separating School and State*, has documented this disturbing trend all too well. "Despite the claim of moral neutrality," he writes, "public education is linked to a particular set of values, namely, the values of the modern welfare, or social-service, state. Those values include moral agnosticism (erroneously called tolerance), government activism, egalitarianism, 'welfare rights' to taxpayer largess, collectivism, and a watered-down version of socialism that looks much like the economic theory of the 1930's known as fascism."

In other words, do away with the state's compulsory attendance laws, and you do away with its ability to deceive most children into believing that mindless compliance with the government and its often wicked agenda makes them "good citizens." No wonder Russ George's single amendment engendered such a firestorm of dissent. It was a direct assault upon the well-being and future viability of the modern megastate.

Aaron Steelman writes from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Busing and Its Consequences

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

Ten years ago, federal district judge Leonard B. Sand ordered the city of Yonkers, New York, to integrate its public schools. Sand accused the city of 40 years of discrimination by concentrating public housing projects in southwest Yonkers. To comply with Sand's ruling, many neighborhood schools closed their doors as busing became de rigueur. Parents fought Sand's edict (at one point 11,000 students stayed home to protest) and eventually appealed to the United States Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case.

With neighborhood schools closing and Judge Sand's order to build low-income housing in more affluent areas, whites fled in the face of diminished control over their children's education, falling property values, and crime. Whereas Yonkers' public school system boasted 53 percent white enrollment in 1986, today the figure is a mere 30 percent.

Sand's prescription was questioned from the beginning, and now is even questioned by members of the local NAACP, the organization that started the mess by jointly filing suit with the Justice Department in 1980. The national organization, of course, will hear none of this and has suspended chapter president Kenneth W. Jenkins for publicly stating that "busing had outlived its usefulness."

This is not the first time the NAACP has run into opposition from within its own ranks on issues of school desegregation. Just last year in Cleveland, black parents resisted what the NAACP called "an old-fashioned" desegregation suit and the cross-district busing it promised. During the Board of Education's hearings on the matter, the majority of witnesses (black and white) spoke in favor of neighborhood schools. A local radio station conducted a poll and found that 75 percent of the adult respondents expressed a preference for neighborhood schools no matter what their racial composition. The NAACP acknowledged it was "swimming against the tide," but stuck to its guns despite the complaints of *black* parents that the civil rights lawyers were "holocausting" their children.

While members of the civil rights establishment predict dire consequences and a society that is "separate and unequal," local leaders and citizens see things differently. Just last fall, Judge Richard Matsch ended Denver's 21-year-old ordeal with forced busing and was praised by the city's officials, most of whom are black. Mayor Wellington Webb, once a proponent of busing, agreed with Matsch's decision, commenting that "the key issue today is to assure that kids receive the best education, regardless of what neighborhood they are in." The Reverend Aaron Gray, president of Denver's Board of Education, was more blunt in describing the change: "Pre-1954 was separate and unequal. The difference today is that you can step into an African-American school and see the same amount of resources provided to a majority Anglo school." On the same note, just south of Yonkers, the former principal of P.S. 111 in the Bronx told the *New York Times* that publicly sponsored integration efforts should be abandoned for the development of "communities of color where social services, decent housing and real education are effectively delivered." He went on to boast that P.S. 111 outperformed all 31 of the predominately white schools in the district and ranked 26th of 631 schools in New York City.

The message of local black leaders and citizens is clear: while they oppose state-mandated segregation, they refuse to support schemes of social engineering that the national civil rights establishment continues to shove down their throats.

Moreover, the NAACP's influence continues to wane in the wake of charges of corruption and lavish expenditures on junkets, cars, and the like. With the dismissal of Ben Chavis in 1994 for a variety of reasons, not the least of which concerned NAACP funds earmarked as hush money for a woman alleging sexual discrimination, the organization is falling into disrepute—even among its staunchest supporters. As the old guard retires, they will be replaced with a new crop of leaders who are putting the health of their communities above quotas and formulas dreamed up by the social scientists who have already wreaked such havoc in the white and black communities.

It is heartening that lessons have been learned, but unfortunate that they were so costly, both in terms of dollars and human suffering. For example, in Yonkers, despite the opinions of the local NAACP, the city still spends $13 million on busing alone. Add to this the original desegregation plan ($37 million), and the result is one giant mistake at taxpayers' expense. Factor in the destruction of communities as families fled to areas that still possessed a modicum of self-government, and one gets an idea of the price of social engineering.

Of course one cannot feel too sorry for Yonkers, since the city dug its own grave by readily accepting federal housing money and the strings attached—one string being the threat of lawsuits if public housing was not racially dispersed. Nevertheless, the waste of tax dollars and the breakup of communities are lamentable occurrences. Now that all are realizing the importance of stable communities and schools, whether they are predominately white or minority, perhaps the era of *Brown* will finally come to a close. Consequently, communities in Yonkers and throughout the nation must now grapple with the task of rebuilding. It is a difficult task, but one

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that should be undertaken with the same enthusiasm of Judge Sand and the federal judiciary's earlier experiments.

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The Dirty Fact About College Admissions

by Daniel J. Flynn

Pitting the state of Texas against four students who had been denied admission to the University of Texas School of Law because of their skin color, the recent *Hopwood* v. *Texas* case could spell doom for racial preferences in public education if affirmed by the Supreme Court. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, whose jurisdiction covers Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, ruled in *Hopwood* that the use of race as a factor in admissions at public educational institutions violates the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, sending into panic an academic establishment already reeling from the University of California Board of Regents' decision last July to eliminate racial preferences on state campuses. Though *Hopwood* may very well be overturned by a higher court, or like the *Bakke* case (1978), be subverted by university administrators who operate outside the law, it's already succeeded in exposing the ugly truths about affirmative action.

In the spring of 1992, Cheryl Hopwood was rejected from the University of Texas School of Law despite posting near perfect test scores and a 3.8 grade point average (GPA). This 32-year-old mother who had to raise a severely handicapped child while working her way through college apparently lacked a "diverse" enough background for UT Law admissions officers. While her test scores and GPA outranked 40 of 41 black students accepted by the school, and all but three of 55 Chicanos offered admission, Cheryl's placement on the "diversity" test lagged far behind the Mexican and African-American students, and she was denied a spot at the law school.

The general impression in academia is that affirmative action gives minorities a "helping hand" while not really harming whites and other nonpreferred groups. The reality is quite different, as a large number of Cheryl Hopwoods across the country can attest. So disadvantaged were the nonpreferred groups at the University of Texas that approximately 700 higher-scoring whites were rejected along with Cheryl Hopwood before the first in-state black resident was denied admission.

UT Law admissions records, made public only after *Hopwood*'s four plaintiffs filed suit, reveal sizable discrepancies between the grades and test scores of whites and those of preferred minorities accepted by the school. In 1992, the year Ms. Hopwood and her three coplaintiffs were rejected by UT Law, white students accepted by the school had a mean GPA of 3.56 and LSAT scores in the 91st percentile, while black students offered admission posted a mean GPA of 3.25, with LSAT scores below the 75th percentile; Mexican-American accepted applicants' mean GPA was 3.27, with LSAT scores in the 78th percentile.

Texas Law admits students on a scale known as the Texas Index, which combines GPA and law school entrance exams. Students fall into three categories on this index: "presumptive admit," the "middle discretionary zone," and "presumptive deny." For whites, Texas Index scores of 192 or lower fell under the "presumptive deny" category. Preferred minorities who scored 189, three points lower than the threshold for denying admission to whites, were classified under "presumptive admit." Among applicants who fell within the 189-192 range on the Texas Index, 100 percent of blacks, 90 percent of Mexican-Americans, but only six percent of whites were offered spots at the school.

So immersed in special-interest politics is the school's admissions policy that Native Americans, Asians, non-Mexican Hispanics, and even foreign-born blacks are penalized in favor of Chicanos and blacks. Surely UT Law admissions officers do not view Nigerians as adding less diversity to its campus than American-born blacks? Or Vietnamese refugees as having experienced any less hardship and discrimination than Mexican-Americans?

Many sympathetic to the aims of affirmative action have even suggested that the University of Texas may have gotten its just due in court because of the extreme nature of the school's admissions program. But there is no reason to believe that Texas's admissions program was any more rigged than the programs of other schools. In fact, administrators from law schools around the country refuted this argument in an effort to tilt the court to UT's side by testifying that their affirmative action policies were nearly identical to those at Texas.

Repeated assurances by "civil rights" activists that affirmative action does not discriminate against whites but rather serves as a boost to minorities in competition with whites of roughly the same qualifications have repeatedly been proven false whenever academic institutions have been forced to open their admissions policies up to outside examination. At UT Law, Georgetown Law, the University of California, and other institutions that have had their admissions data pried open in recent years, affirmative action programs have been shown to be little more than punishment for having been born white, Asian, or any other nonpreferred group.

In those rare cases when the public is allowed to view the true nature of affirmative action programs, it is seldom the case that they do so with the approval of university administrators. More often, the reality of affirmative action is brought to light by renegade students with access to admissions data or through lawsuits. The latter was the case at both UT Law and the University of California schools of law and medicine, which released data only after being sued

LIBERAL ARTS

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY

"Western culture is based on exclusion. Its society places 'others'—women, blacks, children, the old, those with alternative lifestyles, gays, the disabled—as outsiders. At the core of this marginalization is the tendency of powerful groups to 'purify' and dominate space, to create fear of minorities and to ultimately exclude their voices and their knowledge."

—*from* Geographies of Exclusion *by David Sibley, professor of geography at the University of Hull.*

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for consumer fraud by attorney Allan Favish, who misled applicants into believing that the university system did not discriminate on the basis of race.

As the affirmative action debate heats up in the coming months, it is likely that the admission practices of many more schools will be made public. In the wake of the disturbing facts revealed in *Hopwood*, is it any wonder why academics, the most vehement defenders of affirmative action, fight tooth and nail to keep admissions data from the public?

Daniel J. Flynn is a program officer at Young America's Foundation.

LITERATURE

New Criticism, Old Values

by William Pratt

It was in 1942 that John Crowe Ransom coined the phrase "The New Criticism" by publishing a book under that title, a book about the most respected literary critics of the first half of the century, notably T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, William Empson, Yvor Winters, and R.P. Blackmur. But actually, he was criticizing the critics and asking for something better: "Wanted: An Ontological Critic," he declared in his last chapter, as if no critic including himself—and he was one of the great critics—could really satisfy the need to produce a thoroughgoing critique of literature.

In the succeeding decade, Ransom's title became the creed of a critical school, which sought to treat literary works as works of art, not as historical or sociological treatises nor as disguised autobiographies, and the term "New Criticism" became fashionable in the academy and was inevitably abused by those who wanted to seem better critics than they really were. The result was that the "New Criticism" was no longer taken as a call for profounder critics of literature, as Ransom meant it to be (and it should be remembered that Ransom was not only the originator but the first critic of the New Criticism); it was taken instead as a call for narrower critics who sought only to look at the work itself, disregarding the author and his age. But for a time, at least, chiefly through the textbooks of Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks, *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction*, the teaching of literature in American universities was directed toward art rather than history or biography, and the effect was salutary on a generation of college students (as I ought to know, because I was among them), who learned to read poetry and fiction for their intrinsic value as fine arts, rather than for their extrinsic value as history or biography, the prevalent approaches to literature before the New Critics came into force.

Unfortunately, the new quickly becomes the old, and so the "New Criticism" was increasingly attacked even as it became more fashionable in the academy, until, within a couple of decades, it had become a scapegoat for all the unenlightened criticism which tends to dominate any period of literary history. In short, "new" criticism was soon taken to be old hat, and another school arose to challenge it: the now dominant school of Literary Theory, which goes by other fashionable names such as poststructuralism, deconstruction, feminism, Freudianism, and Marxism. The trouble is that the *new* "new criticism" is worse than the *old* "new criticism," which for all its faults did uphold the value of literature as literature, that is, as belonging to the arts rather than the sciences.

What is now fashionable is not really criticism at all, but a variety of social science which pretends to be philosophy, and takes a subversive approach to literature, subordinating the work to the critic—or would-be critic, since none really deserve the name—who feels free to use literature to serve a social or political cause. The assumption of all literary theorists is that they are superior to their subject, which is literature, and can demolish the values on which it rests, namely, artistic judgment and religious faith, in order to put forward a "higher" set of values, such as social egalitarianism and religious skepticism, or what on today's college campus passes for "political correctness."

The pernicious effect of Literary Theory is much worse than any pernicious effect attributable to New Criticism, since it undermines the very teaching of literature, long the bedrock of the humanities or liberal arts. It thereby attacks humane values in general, including the value of academic freedom, the lifeblood of a university. As Literary Theory has replaced New Criticism, intolerance has replaced broad-mindedness, indoctrination has replaced intellectual dialogue, racial and sexual favoritism has replaced merit, and, in general, amorality has replaced morality—for example, by what is politely termed the "sexual revolution." The old values have suffered badly, at the hands of those who would attack them in the name of various political and social causes, and suddenly "grade inflation" has become rampant everywhere in our schools, meaning that even grading standards—any kind of grading standards—are denounced as "elitist."

Obviously, the time has come to demolish Literary Theory as it once succeeded in demolishing New Criticism. But how? And to what end? Can old values beget an even newer criticism, or must we deride all schools of criticism—as the editor of this respectable magazine recently did—rather than restoring literature to its rightful place of honor as the foremost of the liberal arts?

Let us grant that the New Criticism was never what Ransom hoped it would be, genuinely "ontological," that is, a truly philosophical reading of literature in the manner of Aristotle, the first great critic. Another Aristotle would have to appear for that to happen. But let us also acknowledge that New Criticism served in its time to redirect the attention of readers to the work itself; let us not slight its good effect in decrying its bad effects. On the other hand, let us be blunt about what replaced it: in more than 20 years of dominance, Literary Theory has so far failed to produce any good effects at all, and it has had deleterious effects aplenty. Yet it continues to be popular in humanities departments—language and literature, philosophy and religion—to the detriment of its own subjects and the threat to all subjects, even the scientific subjects which should be immune to subjective personal approaches to knowledge. Attempts to discredit the Literary Theorists have so far failed, but we should not lose heart, for bad ideas eventually fail from their own weaknesses, and good ideas ultimately arise again from good values.

The question is, how do we restore those good values, and reconstitute literary criticism so that it becomes worthy

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once more of its subject, which is literature, the heart and soul of any legitimate educational system dedicated to the free exchange of ideas and the furthering of sound knowledge? We cannot go back to the former New Criticism, but we can try to extract from it the principles which enabled it to serve the old values well, and so reestablish literature—great literature, that is, the classics, not minor pieces of writing by negligible writers—as central to the whole academic enterprise and a guide to human culture of any meaningful sort.

The very first principle was the belief that there is a supernatural order of reality, that God is not dead, and that the creation of works of art or literature is really what Simone Weil called "decreation," derived from the original creative act of God, not self-generated by a human agency. Language is the medium of literature, and words are at best the Word of God, the incarnation of spirit in flesh, whatever may be the profane uses of language, and thus works of literature, which are made of language, regenerate the spirit in man; they are, as Robert Penn Warren put it in *Democracy and Poetry*, "a nourishment of the soul."

It is a scandal today for anyone to talk of soul, but Aristotle did not refrain from talking about it; why should human beings today, still deriving our literary knowledge and vocabulary from the Greek classics, be embarrassed to speak about souls and bodies, spirit and flesh? The very idea of "metaphysical" poetry which Eliot and other modern poets like Yeats and Pound wrote, and which Eliot celebrated in his criticism of the poetry of Donne and Marvell, depends on "the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul," as he put it, quoting Aristotle, in one of the most influential essays of the 20th century, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." So the first principle of the old New Critics was religious faith, belief in the sovereignty of God and the immortality of the soul. All the other principles derive from this fundamental conviction—anathema to Literary Theorists—that God exists and inspires real works of art.

The second principle of the old New Critics, as Allen Tate put it in another seminal essay, was that of "Literature as Knowledge," that literature is worth studying in its own right as art, not as a stepchild of politics. Again, Literary Theorists insist that all human knowledge is political in origin, meaning that it is not an end in itself but that it always serves the selfish human end of power over others. If you believe as they do that God is dead, then of course you will be glad to reduce all human activity to the political realm, and will refuse to acknowledge that human beings may pursue unselfish ends, one of which is the creation of works of art. A work of art is admired for its beauty, not for its utility, and for its truthfulness, not for its hunger for power: to maintain that every work of art, literary or otherwise, has a political motive, is to give it a purely human, therefore physical, source and to deny that the impersonal ideals of beauty or truth have anything to do with it. It was quite otherwise with the old New Critics, for whom the first principle of religious faith begot the second principle of literary knowledge.

There is a third principle deriving from the first two, and it is that new works of art can be created in any age, even in our own degenerate times, but that we only recognize such genuine new masterpieces by comparison with older masterpieces, the classics, and so we need standards of aesthetic judgment which come from studying the great literature of the past. Ransom said of his fellow Fugitive poets, who created classics of their own earlier in the century, that they knew the classics, and so could compare their work with the very best. The whole basis of the liberal arts, of the education of free citizens, which descends to us from the Greeks and was renewed in the Renaissance, is the study of literary masterpieces. But this study is not limited to a fixed canon of works, because it changes over time, because we must "Make it New" as Pound insisted, because the order of classics is altered by "the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art" as Eliot maintained in "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

To renew the principles of New Criticism, then, we would have to restore at least three of the old values of the past that are scoffed at by literary theorists of the present: 1) belief in God and the immortality of the soul; 2) belief in art and literature as forms of knowledge that are intrinsically valid; and 3) belief in a historical tradition of masterpieces to be studied for their own value as works of art, as well as for developing the aesthetic judgment necessary to recognize and incorporate new masterpieces in the living tradition.

I could stop there, but I must add one more principle which I think derives from the basic three that governed the New Critics at their best: they not only recognized new masterpieces but gave those works the critical examination they deserved, enabling other readers to understand and take pleasure in the best literature, whether it was old or new. The interpretation of new works follows the recognition that they are worthy of interpretation, and so the study of literature has to include the formation of taste, which is indispensable to any civilization worthy of the name. All literary study being comparative—the term "comparative literature" is a tautology—elucidation is as essential as evaluation in the process of understanding literary classics. Insofar as the New Criticism came to mean "close reading" of literary works—detailed exegesis of a particular poem, story, or play, the sort of careful interpretation which the French have long called *exposition du texte*, or what in theological language goes by the name of hermeneutics—it is a discipline of the mind in the translation of language into meaning. As Allen Tate put it, "All reading is translation, even in the mother tongue," and there is no such thing as a purely literal interpretation of any piece of writing, including the Bible.

To restore the values of the old New Critics, then, we would have to be willing to submit our judgment to the test of past classics and potentially new classics, never resting satisfied with any existing canon but constantly reexamining the masterpieces we have inherited for their humane content, their wisdom, their artistry, and keeping our minds open to the possibility that even now, today and tomorrow as well as yesterday, a new work might come our way which would have as much artistic merit as the great works we have come to know and revere. As Ezra Pound once put it, in his typically irascible way: "Damn your taste! Only let me sharpen your perceptions for a while and your taste will take care of itself."

The sort of new critic I am positing, who might replace the now regnant Literary Theorist, will not betray any of these four principles derived from the old New Critics, but will reevaluate the masterpieces of the past and recognize and interpret the masterpieces of the present and future, both for self-illumination and for the benefit of other readers. He (or she, if she is not a feminist) will approach literature as our common

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heritage, the main repository of humane wisdom, and be ready to learn all that can be learned from it for the good of mankind, himself or herself included. I do not know what we will call this new breed of critics, but I hope we will not forget that what once was called New Criticism upheld old values, and that we forsake these values at our peril, for they are the basic values of civilization, and they are threatened today, as much as at any time in history, with being discarded and forgotten. I am an optimist, and so I believe these old values can and will be renewed, but it will take the most exacting kind of criticism to renew them. I know that such criticism, which takes literature seriously as literature and tries to learn all that can be learned about human values from it, is not currently fashionable, nor is the religious faith that undergirds it, but I also know that both were once respected and they could be respected again, just as they were in the time of the old New Critics—which, after all, was not so very long ago.

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MUSIC

Remembering Casals

by Ralph de Toledano

Talking to musicians or composers has its values, but it seldom adds much to what we know of music. Mozart's letters to his father give you a few insights into the creative process, but Beethoven's are merely a peep into his psyche. Of all the composers who have written about their work and that of others, only Berlioz, and perhaps Stravinsky, could impart with any penetration an internal sense of music—and Berlioz's best commentary was on the art of conducting. So I was not particularly stirred when *Newsweek*'s music editor, a busty Texan whose idea of criticism was to shout obscenities over the phone at the Met's Rudolf Bing, said to me, "If you can take time out when you're in San Juan from the story you're doing on Puerto Rico, why don't you go talk to Pablo Casals? He's giving a concert down there." The "concert" was the *Festival Casals*—after the Prades Festival, his second major break of a long self-exile from public performance.

My lack of enthusiasm had nothing to do with what I felt about Pablo Casals as a musician. The cello is a cruel and inhuman instrument, and as a boy I had watched a friend's father—a cellist for the Philharmonic—at practice, his face a reflection of both pain—"the torment," Casals called practicing—and patience. Casals was then, and in my judgment always will be, Mr. Cello, and in listening to him play it is difficult to separate the man from the instrument. Perhaps, I thought, he might say something memorable, though hardly what might excite *Newsweek*'s music editor. But getting to see him, once I was in San Juan, seemed like an impossibility. He had categorically refused to talk to anyone from the press. He changed his mind when he was told that I was a friend of Luis Muñoz Marin, the first elected governor of Puerto Rico, who had invited Casals to the island and treated him with respect and generosity. "If Toledano is a friend of Don Luis," Casals said, "I will speak to him."

When Spain fell to the forces of Francisco Franco, Casals had vowed never to play in public until the Nationalist regime was overthrown. But a dozen or so years later, he had agreed to perform once more—and those of us who loved music were joyed by his decision. He was approaching 80, and though a man of iron constitution, he was not impervious to the treason of time. New recording techniques offered him the opportunity to put on vinyl his own great brand of musicianship and his superlative mastery, both technically and interpretively, of his instrument. He could bring warmth and vitality and empathy to scores that frequently defeated others—the proof to be found in his interpretation of the six Bach Suites for Cello Unaccompanied. These suites are demanding—taxing instrument, performer, and audience. But if it is not *lèse majesté* to say it, they can sometimes be great room-emptiers. Casals could triumph over this Baroque obstacle course—perhaps because Catalans and Germans have much more in common than either would care to admit.

Casals was living in a small house off the beach at Punta las Arenas, neighbor to San Juan—as a guest of Muñoz and the Puerto Rican government. He was playing the piano as I knocked on his door—a passage from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, a daily exercise, he told me, to "refresh the spirit"—and he called out to me in Spanish to enter. But he insisted on speaking to me in English, though he commented on my Spanish name and asked if my family came from Toledo. I was struck by how much this stocky, balding man with a small pot belly, eyes shining through rimless glasses, reminded me of one of my cousins. I asked him, my first question, what had brought about a change of heart—why he was performing once more. "It is always a sacrifice for an artist not to play," Casals said. Then he looked at the small yellow-and-red Catalan flag on his upright piano and added, "But there are more important things in the world. What right did I have to prosper while my people were persecuted in Spain? And when the war ended, the Spanish people could not understand why they should not be masters of their own destiny. I said this to whoever I thought would listen, even to the King of England. No one listened." What was more important to Casals, or had been, was his passionate opposition to Francisco Franco and the Nationalists in Spain, and his sorrow that the United States had recognized their government.

Sounding like a character out of Hemingway's *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, he said, "The United States should have more dignity. These dictators do terrible things. They kill. And to kill has no dignity." Though he was full of admiration for what the British and their government had done during the war to keep alive what he called the "flame of civilization," he could not forgive Churchill or the Labour government which followed him for not bringing about the fall of Franco—and even speaking well of *El Caudillo*. "What became of Churchill's great promises to put an end of fascism everywhere—or to your President Roosevelt's?" I wanted to talk about music, for I had my own personal and family feelings about Spain which might not accord with his. I respected his assertion that "I possess a moral independence, I am no politician, but an artist who tries to keep faith with his human principles." But I ventured somewhat into the political when I asked him about Wilhelm

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Furtwangler, the great German conductor who had gone into exile in protest against Hitler—but who had nevertheless been barred from the United States because of alleged support of the Nazis. Casals placed Furtwangler among the two or three greatest conductors of the time, but felt that he had remained in Nazi Germany a little too long before taking refuge in Switzerland.

"Let me tell you," Casals said. "Furtwangler came to see me in Switzerland just before the Nazi collapse. I told him, 'Every man to his conscience. You owe me no explanations as to what your true feelings were.' 'I am a musician,' he said. 'I want to make music.' 'Be patient,' I answered him. 'You are lucky that Switzerland welcomed you.'" Given his own history of exile, I thought this somewhat ungenerous. But what I really wanted was to ask him to describe how he had expanded the range and the capacity of the cello, putting his stamp on the way everyone after him would play it. But the lack of "dignity" of Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Churchill was what he wanted to discuss. His need for musical performance, which he had sacrificed for years to make a political statement, was very real and very poignant, and he referred to it several times to punctuate his political sentiments. I might have argued, but it would have been in bad taste to challenge his feelings on the Spanish Civil War, so I simply listened. But he too could not limit himself to this, and he turned to what was most important to him as an artist—the music of Bach.

For Casals, Bach was the greatest genius in music, and he more or less paraphrased what I later learned he had written at the time of the Bach Festival at Prades. "The miracle of Bach cannot be found in any other art. To bare human nature until its divinity becomes clear, to make eternal what is ephemeral—to make the divine human and the human divine—that is Bach, the purest and greatest in music of all time." He had only scorn for those who played Bach as if his compositions consisted of "technical cleverness" when in fact Bach's music "vibrated with sensitivity. All emotion has been expressed by him." He paused and smiled. "Bach is a volcano—and a total creature of his music. He was so far ahead of his time that if he returned today, he would be considered a musical revolutionary."

But Bach was not his only great hero, and during today's "revival," what he said about "Papa" Haydn is both significant and incisive. "Haydn had an imagination that knew no end and a marvelous poetic spirit that went along with the solidity of his musical architecture. From our present musical chaos will come, I am sure, a rediscovery of Haydn and a greatness which has been little recognized. He escapes any kind of classification, and his tremendous power of invention, among the greatest of any composer, makes his music a constant surprise. No matter how many times you hear it or play it, you continue to find something new in it." I said little, but my restraint must have been eloquent because Casals concluded the interview by inviting me to the final rehearsal of the *Festival Casals* orchestra, which he was conducting. He would be interesting to watch because, though he was not in the highest rank among conductors, he believed that great conducting consisted not only of understanding the music but of an empathy between the orchestra and the man with the baton.

I was the only member of the press present at that rehearsal. How a conductor takes an orchestra through its paces tells you much about his approach to music. The orchestra was running through Mozart's A *Major Symphony*, and Casals was happily swinging his baton and his body in time to the music, singing the themes à la Toscanini, though in a much better voice. In the middle of the *Andante*, Casals suddenly dropped his hand, put down his baton, and painfully began walking off the stage, supported by Alexander Schneider, the concertmaster. Casals was pale and composed, fighting the pain of his heart attack until he was in his dressing room. There he collapsed. They took him away in an ambulance, and as he was carried out on a stretcher, he turned his head to look into the concert hall and said, "*Qué lastima, qué lastima, qué maravillosa orquesta.*" I had my story, an eyewitness account of an event carried secondhand by the world press, but *Newsweek*'s music editor was more interested in the who-shot-John of the Met's internecine battles, and it never ran.

Pablo Casals did not conduct or play his cello at the *Festival Casals*, but the peasant strength of his body carried him through, and he returned to recording and concertizing. But that brief encounter with Casals and what today we loosely call *charisma* had cut deep, and I began listening analytically to his playing and to what he gave to it beyond that musicianly and intuitive translation of a composer's intent which set him so far above other cellists, and his ability to cut through time and recreate in our con-

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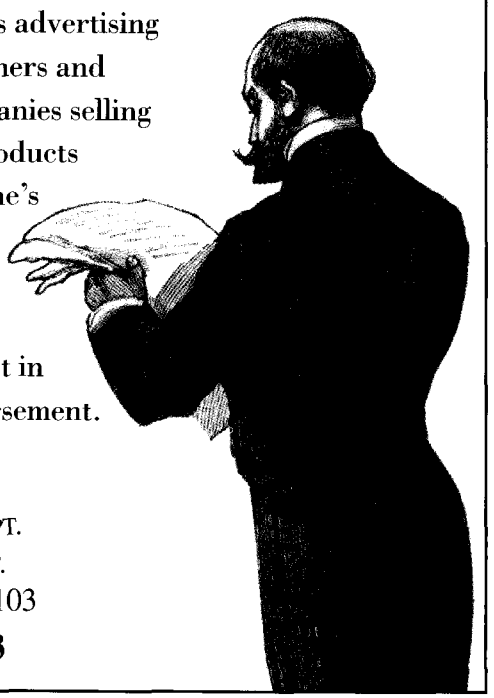

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temporaneity the nuances and cadences of an earlier day. No musician respected the composer's notes and the composer's intent more than Casals. But he always went beyond this, continuing his study of a score, though he knew it well, in order to reach within the mind and the psyche of the composer. The imagination of the performer had to work symbiotically with that of the composer, perhaps arriving at a new expression. As he remarked, "Sometimes, looking at a score, I say to myself, 'What marvelous music. But I must *make* it so.' The performance must give to the work the full meaning of its existence"—as it filtered through his intuition.

"Interpretation of a work," he told a friend, "must be something organic, something which makes you know how to vary all repeated passages, how to establish a graduation of detail in the unity of the work—and how to remember two very simple things: that the natural origin of melody was vocal, and that truth rhythms come from the natural movements of man, from steps and the dance." It was this sense which made his use of the *rubato* so expressive and so natural—a musical liberty as in speech or in singing. To what he called the "constant fever of thinking," he counterposed intuition—more important than academic analysis. Casals always had a very strong feeling about performance, and this contributed to what he considered of great importance. "It is not given to everyone to know how to play the first note of a work"—the first call to the listener. It was not, he would say, particularly a question of technique but of sensitivity, too subtle to define. He would have been thoroughly in agreement with critics who maintain that much of a novel's merit can be perceived in the first paragraph.

Casals brought to the cello not only a superb technique but a whole manner and approach, a sensibility—and this from his early years. The *vibrato* for him was an instrument of musical delineation and expression, restrained but pronounced in passages that contributed to the melodic enfolding, but in other passages almost nonexistent—the dynamics wide-ranging but with never a sob. Tempo, he believed, should be dictated by the music itself, with the composer's direction read only as "indications." Despite his age, he had a greater control of the bow than any other cellist I have heard, the pressure and movement evenly distributed, at heel or tip of the bow, and producing his delicate *pianissimo* and robust *fortissimo*—something achieved on the less strenuous but almost as inhuman violin by Isaac Stern, whose bow, fingers, wrist, and arm seem joined together by God. Casals used the whole bow for long notes, but only part of the bow for shorter notes, giving them variety and emphasis, the part of the bow employed being dictated by the meaning of each note. His fingering was something that he developed for himself, and it revolutionized the playing of all cellists.

Virgil Thomson was almost but not quite right when he remarked that cello performance in our time derived *exclusively* from Casals. But certainly no cellist playing today is not in Casals' debt. Who else could give us those magnificent musical *veronicas*? And there was a *personal* approach in his relationship to his instrument. "I have a great affection for the strings of my cello and I keep them on as long as possible," he once said. "If one breaks before a concert it worries me because I have to do a lot of preparation in order to learn the characteristics of a new string."

The records that Pablo Casals made over the years are being reissued one by one on CD, and on those in which he is soloist there is always that calm excellence and that deep understanding of the score—the color and tonal variety and intuition which illuminated whatever he was playing—Bach, Beethoven, Schubert. His preference when listening to his own recordings was, interestingly, to play them at a speed faster than that at which they were recorded—the Bach suites a tone or a tone and a half sharper, with no concern over the resulting difference of keys. But as recorded, those suites still burst forth as exciting commentary, even as he reined in later and more florid compositions. His sense of the winged chariot at his heels made him return to performance, but until his death it seemed as if time had not touched him. As I listen to his recordings, I think of him walking off that stage, forgetting the anguish of his heart but not his dignity. I think of his musical genius and his artist's simple outlook on the complexities of nations and politics. As a Spaniard, he thought first of dignity, and of the loyalty to whatever it is in a man which makes him an artist. But for the thought and the genius and the little Catalan flag, he would not have been Pablo Casals.

Ralph de Toledano writes from Washington, D.C. His latest book is The Apocrypha of Limbo, *a collection of religious poems.*

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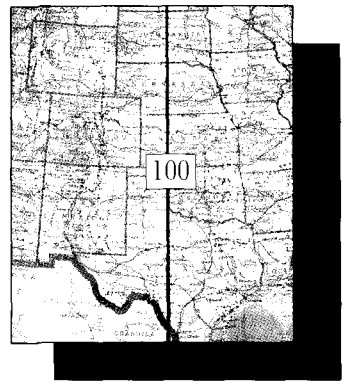
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Up From Michigan

Fontenelle Creek ran fast and brown at the crossing, the waves flashing backward, flooding islands of willow that bent before the strength of the water to show the gray undersides of the slender leaves. I left the jeep at the trailhead on the near side of the ford and commenced walking, taking along only binoculars and a new pair of yellow elkhide gloves.

I walked very quickly up the trail through the dark cold woods and across the two shaded openings in the trees to Bear Trap Creek. The creek was high with the late spring runoff, all the stepping-stones covered by domes of clear foaming water. I walked straight through it, feeling the snowmelt soak in around my feet, and up the opposite bank in squelching boots. On the grassy rise beyond, a snag lay across the base camp where Kovaches used to put a hunting trailer before the Forest Service closed the road, overlooking the creek where it descends the steep-sided canyon. Beneath the flooding, the changed meanders cut since fall by the runoff showed plainly. It was hot in the open bottom, going between the willows growing over the trail on the creek side and the wildflowers and sagebrush rising steeply with the terrain on the other, and before I had walked half a mile the boots were dry and the socks inside them only damp. Baked by the sudden heat, the red clay trail fixing the tracks of deer and elk was rigid underfoot. I pushed hard in spite of a bunged knee, drawing down air to the bottom of my lungs and setting each foot well ahead of the other as I breasted the slope: climbing back from the pale watery green of northern Michigan where things had not gone so well last weekend, especially for the knee.

Here in the canyon there was no breeze but the smell of the June sun on the red clay and the black pine boughs. Arrowleaf balsam bloomed yellow below the edge of purple cliff, and small butterflies fluttered ahead as I walked in the trail. I halted behind a flight of them and bent above the butterflies as they fanned their wings, which were silver with circumscribed spots on the undersides and tender blue above. At a bend



in the trail I started a young bull moose, his paddles still in velvet and his spring coat patchy with clumps of the dead winter hair, from the creek where he had been taking a midafternoon drink. Climbing hard and watching, I had no need of thinking, and no desire to do it. The restorative powers of nature: we really do need an environmentalist movement. But not this one.

As the snow melted out of the mountains and the back country opened up, fox-faced urbanites were venturing out of Salt Lake City, Denver, Boise, and Phoenix, into the Wyoming wilds. I met one this afternoon, driving his Land Rover with a canoe strapped to the roof, on the road from Kemmerer, and deliberately gave him false directions. He's probably trapped in mud up a game trail right now, 100 miles from nowhere. Of course he was an environmentalist of some sort, gasoline-powered and without a backpack and pitons. Alston Chase merely confirms what I have always suspected: the environmentalist movement is essentially fraudulent, hypocritical, dishonest—based on "science" it knows to be false and pursuing agenda that extend far beyond environmental preservation. I keep pretty well abreast of environmentalist literature, and environment-related stories in the press. Yet it was news to me that, as Chase relates in his new book,* the spotted owl is *not* endangered, and that the federal government's decision virtually to shut down the logging industry in the Pacific Northwest was made in full knowledge of the fact. It also was news that old-growth forests in the region are, historically speaking, a recent development, and that the Northwest, at the time of Columbus's landfall on Hispaniola, had substantially less forest cover than it does today. (The same is true of the rest of the North American continent.) Environmentalists know this, and so do the federal agencies that support the policies environmentalists demand. They never talk about it, however, and neither do the media and other representatives of the cultural, political, and financial establishment that has made "ecosystem stabilization" and "preservation of species" principal mantras of a popular religion more respectable than Christianity and as superstitious as Hinduism. The National Environmental Policy Act in 1969, and the Endangered Species Act in 1973, were passed by Congresses eager to demonstrate the fundamental benevolence of a government fighting a bloody and unpopular war, but without imagination to foresee the disruptive potential of legislation that to them—and everyone else, including American industry—seemed almost entirely symbolic, and completely unobjectionable. It took about a decade for the import of NEPA and ESA to sink in, and even then not everybody saw the light. Bill Clinton, for instance, became President on a promise to find legislative solutions to the impasse between environmentally-minded federal bureaucrats and the Wise Use rebels. Shortly after his taking office, however, the green lobby seems to have buttonholed him to explain the infinite value of environmentalism to a national government dedicated to extending its control, largely by stealth, over everything that walks, creeps, or has its being in the United States of America—and beyond it. The President, we all know, is not a man who easily withstands temptation.

Indian Ridge appeared around a bend in the canyon, a steep backwall still covered in snow and crested by snow cornices. Clouds moved out from behind the ridge, silver and white, piling high into the deep sky, imminent in their purity and detail through the vaporless atmosphere. I paused in the hollow where Bear Trap diverges from its tributary and

*Alston Chase, *In A Dark Wood: The Fight Over Forests and the Rising Tyranny of Ecology* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995).

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the pitch of the trail increases, looking up through aspen stands toward elk camp, still a couple of miles farther on. I felt my leg. The muscles were unstiffened and the knee seemed all right so far, but I was expecting it to give trouble in the descent. I sat on the grass to watch a redtailed hawk pivot slowly on one wingtip before catching a thermal and soaring until, from a great height, he plunged toward the mountain slope, pulled out of his dive, and slid sideways on a lateral current, aided by slow occasional beats of his curved wings. Behind him, the sun came through the long primary and the secondary feathers, outlining the dark head and body in fire before he disappeared suddenly behind a wall of the dark pine trees.

I rose from the grass and started downhill, pulling back on the hurt leg before setting my foot to reduce the shock and cushion the swollen knee. The shadows grew toward four o'clock and the down-canyon wind had begun, tossing the willows and raising a low roar in the pine woods that merged with the rush of the creek. Unarmed, my progress covered by the flow of wind and water, I looked far out and around as I went, to avoid getting up on a bear and having to climb a tree. Years ago, when an elk tag was also a license to take a black bear, I was hunting bulls early one October day with John Kovach along the top of the ridge that forms the northwest wall of Bear Trap canyon when John asked, "If you were to see a bear, would you shoot it?" "Of course." "Well, I know where a big sow lives. Come on, and I'll let you have the first shot." He led through a stand of black timber to the den where we stood with our guns at ready, but no bear came out. Long scratch marks scarred the bark of some of the trees eight feet and more above the duff and fallen pine needles, which smelled of bear. Today bear hunting is being challenged by animal rights activists in the East who have sued the Forest Service to halt bear-baiting until the agency has made an environmental assessment and adopted a set of formalized rules governing the taking of bear (which the state game commissions have already done). "What good are grizzlies?" Clyde Clark asked last fall while going around my horses between swing shifts at the coal mine. What good are Wayne Pacelle and Ingrid Newkirk? The urbanization of the West and the triumph of urban values over rural ones are now accepted "facts" out here, including by environmentalists, some of whom seem to welcome the situation. But Marc Reisner, the water historian, points out that the urban West is an irrigation civilization, and every irrigation civilization in human history has failed, sooner or later. Of course the rural West is also dependent on irrigation, but on a far lesser scale. If the deepening water crisis were to end, say 100 years from now, in the collapse of the Western megalopolises, then the destiny of the West would once again be predominantly rural. Should Westerners be planning for a rural economy and a rural culture a century from now? Ed Abbey, for one, might have said yes. He explained why in *Good News*, the worst novel he ever wrote. Seven years after his death I continue to miss Ed, but I am also mad at him. What kind of friend leaves his friends with nothing new that's good to read? Thank God this knee didn't have to carry me all the way down from elk camp.

From a small park on the far side of the creek a pair of coyotes stared at me across an early supper before bolting toward the timber. I waded the creek and went over to have a look at the remains of their meal. It was a cow elk, dead probably since early spring. When Bill Wilson, the vet, opened the stomach of a coyote he'd shot, he found it full of maggots. The teeth remained intact in the jawbone, but I had neglected to carry a knife as well as a revolver and lacked a means of cutting the ivories away. Rising from my throbbing knee, I crossed back over the creek and got on the trail again.

Western culture is finally a type of frontier culture, and the preservation of frontier culture means leaving things deliberately unfinished and underdeveloped. Are the Wise Use people really capable of finding satisfaction and fulfillment in underdevelopment? Have they the wisdom to appreciate the good life while it is theirs, and not try to push it to its "logical" conclusion? If so, they are nearly unique in human history—the wisest men since the Wise Men traveling home by night to Mesopotamia. Here is the challenge for Western patriots. Westerners ought not to allow Washington to crucify them on a barbwire fence post. Nor should they crucify themselves on a cross of gold of their own devising. If the aim of the Wise Use movement is to reject Big Money together with Big Government; if it is to promote animal husbandry, silviculture, and extractive industry in ecologically and socially responsible ways; if it is to moderate respect for abstract wealth, power, and the other fetishes of empire, and to smash the idolatry of Growth worship, then I am for the Wise Use program. If, on the other hand, the movement's secret goal is simply to employ the power of the Western myth to transform Western civilization into a facsimile of the rest of the nation, I am against it, and wish all Wise Users in Hell.

Occluded by rising thunderheads in the west, the sun came and went on my back as I approached the mouth of Bear Trap canyon. Crossing the ford I paused in midstream to bathe my knee in the cold lashing water before wading onto the bank, where I removed the boots and wrung out my socks. The inside of the knee was marbled in purple, yellow, and green, but the swelling had subsided and much of the stiffness had worked out of it. I drew on the clinging socks with difficulty, relaced the boots, and walked the last quarter-mile to the jeep.

The world looked better somehow than it had when I left it on my way into the mountains. My world, not the contemporary one-size-fits-all world: ProleAmerica, with its profound ignorance and ugliness, its piggish culture, aimless men, and faithless women. There is a loss that comes from living substantially apart from men—and women—but in certain times and situations it is the only way. I got up in the jeep and put the key into the ignition. The engine turned over, cranked, and kept cranking, not catching. The 1970 Toyota motor—the straight-six Chevy engine of the 1950's—does not seem to care for the unleaded gasoline I have been feeding it lately. I rested the battery before trying again. It is 49 miles back to civilization, dirt road all the way except for the last six or seven, and the knee is not responding well to the clutch pedal. I let the carburetor drain, and tried once more. The engine shook itself hard all over like a wet dog, and fired, sending out blue smoke through the broken tailpipe. That gave me a good feeling. I could have walked, of course, but 49 miles is a long way on a bum leg, and the waitresses at the Frontier Saloon have the prettiest smiles as they make their way through the barroom twilight, carrying a T-bone steak and a double gin martini on a tray. c

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The John Randolph Club

Crystal City Marriott
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OCTOBER 5-6, 1996

* * *

"Nationalism, Populism, and the Future of the American Right"

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The conference includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday, as well as breakfast on Sunday. Registration is $225 before September 1, or $250 thereafter. Checks should be made payable to the John Randolph Club and mailed to Burt Blumert, Center for Libertarian Studies, Crown Building, 875 Mahler Road, Suite 150, Burlingame, CA 94010.

A limited number of rooms are available at a special rate of $85 per night, single or double occupancy. Room reservations can be made by calling the Marriott at (800) 228-9290.

Speakers will include:

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E. Christian Kopff, and
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* * *

Preceding the meeting on **Friday, October 4**, The Rockford Institute will hold its Twentieth Anniversary Dinner. The featured speakers are **Chilton Williamson, Jr.**, and **Harold O.J. Brown**, discussing their new books, *The Immigration Mystique* and *The Sensate Culture*. For more information about the dinner, please call Sarah Trimble at **(815) 964-5811**.

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The Southern Renaissance Collection

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Is Davis A Traitor?, non-fiction, 1866
by Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 272 pages
Introduction by Dr. Clyde N. Wilson
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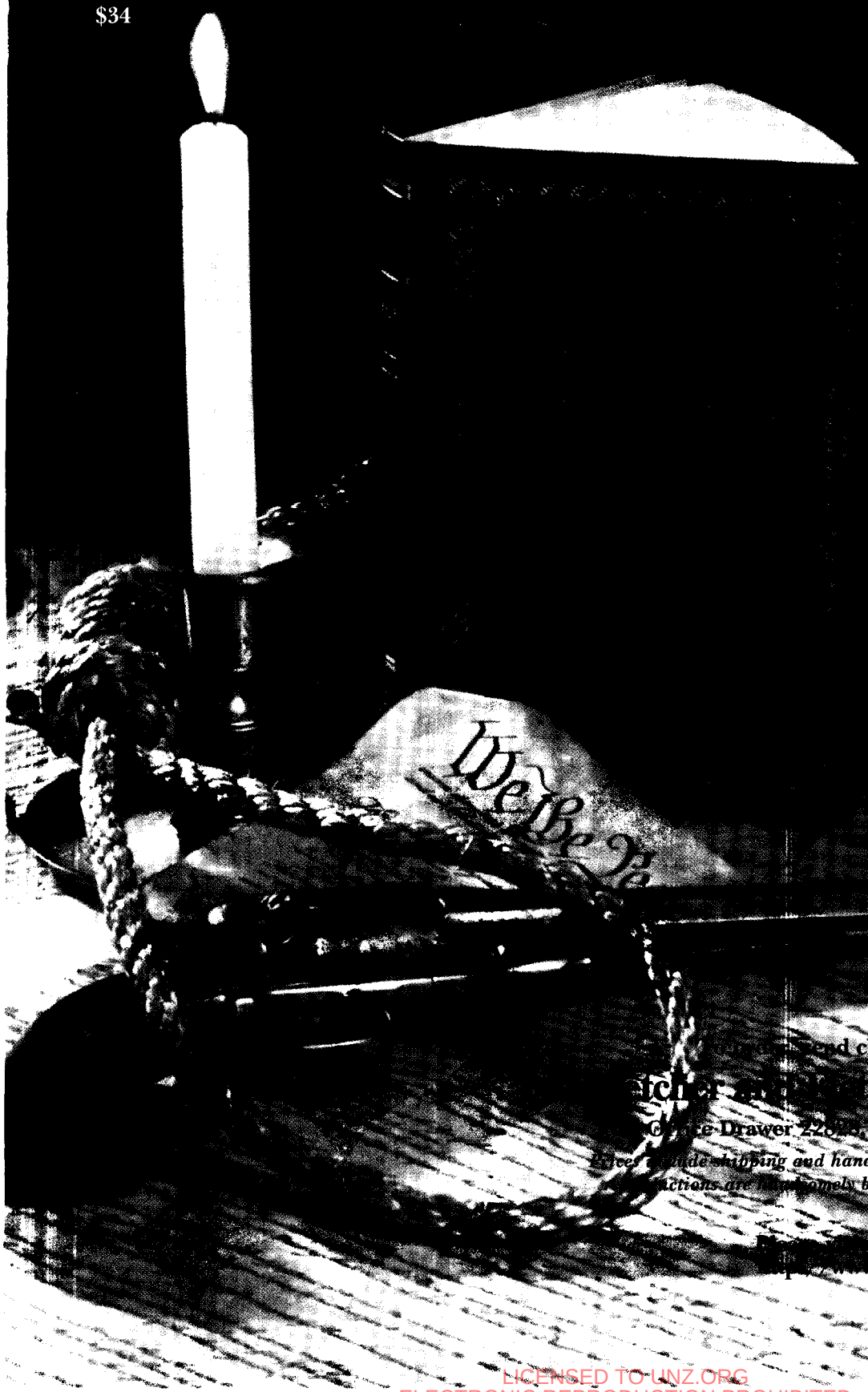

[This book's] "importance is evident from the story Bledsoe often related of his encountering General Lee shortly after the War between the States. Lee remarked to him: 'Take care of yourself, Doctor; you have a great task; we look to you for our vindication.'

"And vindicate the Confederacy Bledsoe did—as ably as it has ever been done; as ably as it ever can be done in an indifferent world where might is often mistaken for right. A number of Southerners wrote books on the constitutional understandings and political and moral motives that governed the Southern people in their great lost struggle for independence. None did it better than Bledsoe. His argument for the right of secession is absolutely irrefutable to any honest mind. No single Northern apologist—and he takes them all on—is left with a leg to stand on.

"*Is Davis a Traitor; or Was Secession a Constitutional Right Previous to the War of 1861?*, the ablest of all defenses of the Confederacy, was first published in 1866 by Innes & Company of Baltimore. It has been printed twice: by Hermitage Press of Richmond in 1907, and by J.P. Bell of Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1915 under a different title, *The War Between the States: or Was Secession a Constitutional Right Previous to the War of 1861?*

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—Dr. Clyde N. Wilson,
University of South Carolina

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